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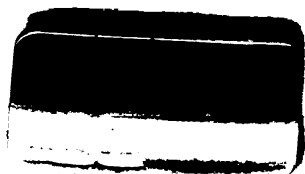
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OR  
Universal Dictionary of Knowledge.

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THIRD DIVISION.  
HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY.

**LONDON :** Printed by W. CLOWES & SONS, Stamford-street.

THE  
LIFE OF THOMAS AQUINAS:  
A DISSERTATION  
OF THE  
SCHOLASTIC PHILOSOPHY  
OF THE  
MIDDLE AGES.

BY THE  
REV. RENN DICKSON HAMPDEN, D.D.,  
REGIUS PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

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*Francis 1221-1274 Bonaventura  
1190-1277 Albertus Magnus*

## THOMAS AQUINAS. *Thomas*

BORN A.D. 1224, DIED A.D. 1274.

*1224*

*1274* *Louis 9<sup>th</sup>*

*1265-21 Dante*

### 1. Uniformity of Scholastic Biography.

THE Biography of the Schoolmen of the Middle Age presents, at the first view, little to interest the general reader, who seeks to be led through a series of incidents various in character and striking in effect. A prospect seems stretched before him of wild plains or barren sea, without any landmarks to arrest the eye, or irregularities to break the dull level. But it is only at the first vague glance of the subject that it appears in this uninteresting form. The level which, whilst we viewed it from a distance, seemed nothing but uniformity, on the nearer approach discloses the variety of hill and valley, which its broad surface had concealed from the distant survey. And so the life of the Schoolmen, when

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closely studied, is by no means devoid of the interest naturally to be expected from an account of any one among men, whose name has attracted the admiration of Ages, and thus obtained an historical importance.

But the interest here is of a different kind from that which an unreflecting prejudice may suggest to our wishes. It is true, that there is something of that uniformity which repels and disappoints both the imagination and the feelings. There are no vicissitudes of fortunes like those which diversify the story of the more busy agent in the History of the world. For the most part, the life of the Philosopher of the Schools of the Middle Age was drawn out in even tenour, amidst the still shades of the cloister, or the wrangling but still innocuous tumults of the Schools. We may single out, indeed, the instance of the celebrated Abelard in the XIIth Century; whose calamities, the effects of the vicious system of the Age more than the fault of the individual, have rendered him notorious in the page of Ecclesiastical and Literary History,

no less than his labours as a Philosopher and a Theologian. But with this exception, one uniform character seems to prevail over the whole assemblage of illustrious names which the annals of the Schools present.

## 2. Peculiar Interest of that Uniformity.

Is there, however, no interest even in this very uniformity? Is variety of incident all that captivates the reader of Biography? If the development of human character be a principal object in the record of human actions and events, then is the very uniformity of the Scholastic Biography an important feature in it, demanding our attention and close examination. For the sameness of character, which we thus observe diffused over so large a surface of human life, is clearly not a fortuitous desultory effect; but is an index to the philosophical eye, of the force of circumstances in influencing and modifying the human mind. Men born in different conditions of life, of different tempers and talents, have been found to be acted on by the discipline of circumstances



in the Middle Age, nearly in the same manner, and to have yielded to the same impressions. It is an interesting inquiry, then, to trace these dominant influences in the life of any of those distinguished individuals who shone as the luminaries of their own dark Age. It is the Philosophy of Man that we are unconsciously searching into: and even the scanty fragments of incident which we may be able to collect, are valuable: for they give us some instruction in the elements of which our nature is compounded, some illustration of what it is susceptible of under the varied action of society and education.

### 3. Aquinas pre-eminent among the Schoolmen.

The life of Aquinas may be particularly selected as a type of the Scholastic Biography. His name is familiar to every one, as the representative of the class to which he belongs. That very familiarity is an evidence of the conspicuous place which he holds among the Theological Philosophers of the Middle Age. But we have been taught at the same time to associate his

name with all that is dark in Religion or in Philosophy: and we are apt, therefore, to think of him with some degree of ridicule or contempt, as unworthy of the serious inquiry of enlightened times. In truth, however, Aquinas, when impartially examined, will be found not to shrink from a comparison with the Philosophers of the brightest period of Literature. If we are to judge of the Philosopher from the intrinsic powers of mind displayed, independently of the results attained by him, which chiefly depend on the concurrence of favourable circumstances, then may Aquinas be placed in the first rank of Philosophy. If penetration of thought, comprehensiveness of views, exactness the most minute, an ardour of inquiry the most keen, a patience of pursuit the most unwearied, are among the merits of the Philosopher, then may Aquinas dispute even the first place among the candidates for the supremacy in speculative science.

4. Nobility of his Family.—Educated at Monte Cassino ; afterwards at Naples.

Descended from a noble ancestry on both sides ; his father Lodolph being Count of Aquino, and his mother Theodora, daughter of the Count of Theate, the future Saint and Doctor of the Church seemed destined for a fortune of life very different from that, to which his own temper subsequently directed his choice. He was born at the castle of Roccasicca at Aquino, in the year 1224,\* being, as it seems, the youngest of several sons. Whilst his brothers, however, pursued the military profession, the circumstances of his early life soon marked him out for another path of employment and distinction. Being sent at the age of five years to the monastery of Monte Cassino, one of the usual places of education for the children of Italian Nobles, during the five years spent there, he gave indication, even at this early period, of that seriousness and abstractedness of mind, which characterised his maturity. The thoughtful manner of the child attracted,

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\* *Sub initium anni* 1225. Oudin, in *Vit.*

indeed, the notice of the Abbot of the Convent ; by whose recommendation his parents sent him to Naples, which was then established as a flourishing School of Philosophy under the patronage of the Emperor Frederic II. The six years which he passed at Naples tended only to foster and 'develope this contemplative disposition : and it was a natural result when, at the age of seventeen <sup>1 2 11</sup> years, he passionately devoted himself to the monastic life ; embracing the profession of a Dominican, and adhering to his resolution, in spite of the remonstrances and opposition of his family.

#### 5. Cessation of inducements to active Life at this Period.

We may, perhaps, at first be at a loss to conceive the inducement to a young man of rank, thus to relinquish his hereditary pretensions, and to embark on a scheme of life, in which distinction was to be sought by dint of personal exertion. We might wonder the less, had we heard of his leaving his father's home on some romantic project of adventure, suggested by the enthusiasm of a young and ardent mind ; such as would be fur-

nished by the occasion of the Holy Wars. But our surprise will be removed, when we reflect on the general condition of the Western, or Latin World in those times, and the relation in which the Church then stood to the community at large. The Crusades of the XIIth Century had supplied the cravings of the public mind for some matter of interest and excitement, to vary and relieve the listlessness which had spread over the whole face of society. The spontaneous impulse and blind obedience, with which the spiritual call to fight the battles of the Lord in a distant land, was answered throughout the length and breadth of Christendom, show the existence of that demand by which they were so readily met. But by those very events, the cause which had stimulated, and in a great measure indeed occasioned them, was removed ; and the public mind found employment in a new direction. The fact is evidenced in the little interest taken in the Crusades of the following century. Infidels were yet to be exterminated from the land of the Holy Sepulchre ; the sacred duty of waging interminable war against the Infidel still continued to be preached. But the

call was no longer heard with alacrity : the interest was gone : and the change of circumstance was not a state of inaction, as of exhaustion after violent exertion, but of employment, as we have said, in a new direction. We may characterise the activity which then began to develope itself, in general terms, as an expansion of intellect, as a reaching towards larger and more diversified means of learning and information. The efforts made in this direction were indeed feeble in their result : they were those of persons ignorant of the true grounds of mental cultivation, of the right method of applying any existing resources to that end. But still there was a vigour about them ; a spirit of enterprise, which, in more felicitous circumstances, would undoubtedly have produced more fruitful results. There was enough certainly in the intellectual labours of the XIIIth Century, however, in the pride of modern improvements in Literature, we may look back on them with contempt, to engage the elevated and aspirant mind. Little really worthy of such minds was to be accomplished by the adventures of a military life, the only ~~other existing~~ resource besides the

pursuit of Literature, to those endued with any energy of character. The spirit of Chivalry, as it is called, had its charms for those cast in a rougher mould ; to whom the busy stillness of the intellectual life would in any Age have seemed no better than torpor and stupidity. But to the gentler, more thoughtful disposition of mind, the diversion into the quiet paths of Philosophy, would be eagerly hailed as a refuge from the storms of the world, where it might freely exert its strength, and come back from its excursions, loaded with the spoils of bloodless victories.

#### 6. Social Importance of the Church.

To those, however, who were duly susceptible of the refinement begun at that period, the Church of the XIIIth Century presented the only opportunity for indulgence of the sentiment awakened in their minds. The great Society of the Church itself, and the several subordinate associations into which it was divided, the Monastic Orders, and the Schools of Theology, presented means of combination, and opportunities for the display

of personal talent and influence, which could be found nowhere else. The Church in fact, as it then was constituted, was the great centre of power. Men who looked on what passed around them with any shrewdness of discernment, could not but observe that, whilst kings and armies were the ostensible agents in the affairs of the world, it was the power of the Church which actuated the whole machine, and guided, if it did not always originate, the complex movements of the social mass. If ~~there was ambition then in the breast of any one, here was the theatre on which it might act; if there was the love of Literature, here it might find opportunities for its gratification; if there was concern for the public good, the high-born wish to be among the benefactors of the human race, here were the means provided by which either good or evil might be achieved on the greatest scale. Nor was the simple circumstance of the fellowship subsisting between members of the Church as such,—and more particularly of that intimate connexion between individuals of the same Religious fraternity, —an inconsiderable attraction to men of sensibility~~



and refinement, in those days when society scarcely existed in the world at large. In these associations, the artificial distinctions which separated man from man, disappeared. Men met together on a principle independent of the passions or the vicissitudes of the world, the principle of equality in the sight of Him who is no respecter of persons. At the same time, there was enough in them to solicit and reward the candidates for the spiritual Society, who entered it with higher pretensions of birth, or talent, or character. The dignities of Bishop, or Abbot, or General of an Order, held out to such persons a rank analogous to the aristocracy of worldly station ; or where a more refined and spiritual ambition might be superior to such attractions, the loftier, more abstract honours of saintly reputation, or the refined luxury of a profession of piety, maintained to superior merit its due relative situation in the community.

7. Aquinas won to the Dominican profession by John de St. Julian.—Enters a Monastery at Naples.

Probably indeed the adoption of the monastic profession by Aquinas, in the first instance, was not altogether voluntary. The first step may have been taken with little reflection on the momentous change of life consequent on it; from the mere enthusiasm of a youthful mind, and an ardent compliance with the example and wishes of a revered instructor. The Dominican and Franciscan Orders, themselves in great measure an effect of the peculiar circumstances of the times, were but recently established in the early part of the XIIIth Century. The spirit of proselytism consequently was actively exerting itself at this period, to obtain for each its respective votaries, and raise it to an ascendancy over the rival institution. The Dominican Order especially, as framed in a more worldly spirit of fanaticism, had its clever and active partisans dispersed every where, who, by the fame of their erudition and piety, and by their tact, won the hearts of devout hearers to their cause. It was

by the addresses of a preacher at Naples, a Dominican, by name John of St. Julian, that Aquinas was induced to take up the monastic profession. He had imbibed the teaching of the Monk with an eager attention, and anxiously sought an opportunity of personal conference with his spiritual instructor. A conversation with St. Julian decided his purpose. His religious wish was communicated to the brothers, and readily approved by them; on which he immediately assumed the habit of a Dominican, and immured himself within a Monastery of the Order at Naples.

8. Indignation of his Mother.—He is rescued by his Brothers, and confined at his own Home.

Intelligence of this proceeding on his part was received by his family with the greatest concern and indignation. Theodora, his mother, especially, remonstrated with passionate vehemence against the act, and strove to reclaim him to his family. The writer of the Life prefixed to his Works, in his partiality to the sacred Order, would have us believe that the resentment of

the mother was an after-thought; and that at first she expressed the piety of her heart in devout thankfulness to God at the event. But with what probability this statement is made, we may judge from the active measures taken to frustrate the purpose of her son. The recovery of such a step was not easily to be effected, or rather was impracticable. The victim of the cloister was bound by a spell which no entreaties or menaces could unsay. In this difficulty, force was resorted to as the only expedient. But the Dominicans were on the alert. To prevent the effect of an interview with his mother, they conveyed their novice to Rome, intending to transmit him thence to Paris. His mother followed him to Rome, and disappointed of seeing him there, instructed his brothers to watch the roads, and intercept him on his way. They succeeded in surprising him as he was drinking at a spring after the fatigues and heat of his journey, forcibly seized him, and struggling in vain to strip him of his monastic habit, carried him away to his home. His mother received him with tears, and provided for his future security, by

confining him within their own castle. The Dominicans complained to the Pope of the sacrilege: but though the Pope was disposed to favour the new Religious Orders, as the great bulwarks of his authority, the power of the Emperor, who was in the interest of the brothers of Aquinas, was then in collision with that of the Apostolic See, and could not be boldly opposed. His family was left for the present, therefore, in undisturbed possession of their recovered prize.

9. Expedients tried by his Family to reclaim him.

Aquinas being once more in the bosom of his own family, every argument of kindness was tried by his mother and sisters to alter his unwelcome purpose. He was proof against these, and even against the severities of angry rebuke; expressing his readiness to submit to the closest confinement, but never to abandon the Religious profession which he had assumed. To complete the trial of the future Saint, by an experiment usual in the legends of Saints, the biographer adds, that the brothers of Aquinas next assailed

him with the blandishments of female society ; thinking that the resolution which had proved inexorable under stern trials, might at length yield to softer impressions. They introduced accordingly a female visitant to his apartment. Consolation was made the ostensible pretext of the visit ; whilst under this cover all the winning arts of womanly endearment were plied to solicit his affections. His firmness had nearly failed him under this ordeal, when suddenly collecting himself, with a rude indignation, he abruptly dismissed his fair assailant, scaring her from his presence with such arms as were ministered by the fury of the moment, a burning stick snatched from the hearth. He then threw himself, as the story proceeds, before the sign of the Cross, which the random force of the stick had traced on the wall ; and praying for strength to resist the temptations of the flesh, and for an entire devotedness, he at length fell asleep from exhaustion. The scene is closed by a vision of two angels, appearing to him as he slept, girding him, and strengthening his chaste determination.

10. He is Imprisoned for Two Years; relieves his Solitude by Prayer and Study.

Aquinas patiently endured this imprisonment at his own home for two whole years, relieving his stubborn solitude only by prayer, and religious contemplation, and literary studies. Together with the Scriptures, the Book of the Sentences, the celebrated Digest of Theology compiled by Peter Lombard, a Bishop of Paris in the preceding Century, now engaged his attention. At the same time he employed himself in writing a Commentary on Aristotle's Book of Fallacies. The art of disputation was cultivated at this period with the most intense interest, as we shall presently show more fully, being regarded as an essential part of the education and business of the Theologian. The writings of Aristotle in particular, being more known to the Christians of the West about the same time, attracted extraordinary curiosity: and both the Dominicans and Franciscans dexterously availed themselves of the course which the fashion of the Age had taken; establishing Chairs of Philo-

sophy at the various Schools and Universities, for the express purpose of expounding the doctrines of Aristotle. We find accordingly a Logical Work of that Philosopher occupying the leisure of the secluded devotee, no less than studies of a strictly Theological character.

11. His Escape connived at by his Mother.—Returns to Naples, and becomes the disciple of Albert of Cologne.

The tenderness of a mother was no match for the implacable resolve of an enthusiastic self-devotion. The mother of Aquinas, who had all along been the chief agent in these measures of restraint, finding all endeavour to turn him from his purpose utterly unavailing, at length gave up the unequal contest, and connived at his escape; preferring probably making the concession in that way to openly surrendering him to the demands of the Dominicans. The Monks were apprized that his escape might be effected by night. Accordingly, they were in attendance at the stated time, at the well-known window of his apartment, through which they had been



used secretly to convey to him the woollen habit of the Order. He let himself down from the window, was received by them, and conducted to Naples, and then to Rome, to John the Teutonic, the General of the Order. This took place in the year 1244, when he was in the twentieth year of his age.

He was immediately placed by the General of the Order under the charge of Albert of Cologne, also a Dominican by profession, and whose fame for science and erudition, then diffused throughout Europe, had obtained for him the distinctive appellation of the Great. The School of Albert, indeed, like that of Plato at Athens, (if we may venture to compare the degenerate Philosophy of the Middle Age with the high thoughts and animated eloquence of the classic Age of Science,) appears to have been the great seminary from which the chief Philosophers of the subsequent period were propagated. Plato combined the traditions of ancient wisdom extant at his time, and moulded them into a whole by the force of his genius : and it

is to that spirit which he breathed over the whole, and which his disciples imbibed, that we may trace both the acute vigour of the Aristotelic Logic, and the masculine dignity of the Stoic Ethics. So to Albert of Cologne the epithet of the Great appears to be not unworthily attached, if we look to the effects of his influence on the Philosophy of the Schools of the Middle Age. Before him there hardly existed any Philosophy that might properly be called Scholastic. There had been many who had taught the like principles, and had reasoned in the same manner; particularly we may notice Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury; who in the century preceding composed several Treatises which display an astonishing power of metaphysical reasoning. So, again, Abelard, though inferior to Anselm, might be mentioned as an eminent instance at the same period, of the same kind of metaphysical acuteness. And perhaps but for him,—but for that popularity which Abelard attained, and for the disciples of his School, who afterwards filled influential stations in the Church,—the School of Albert would not have been fre-

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quented, or his method of philosophizing have been so generally adopted. Still Albert must have the praise of having systematized the Scholastic discussions ; of having perfectly accomplished what Anselm had only partially executed ; the drawing to one point the mass of reasonings which had hitherto existed in dispersed portions, and combining the various principles employed in those reasonings into one peculiar Philosophy, to which we give the peculiar name of Scholasticism.

12. He holds the Office of Master of the Students  
under Albert.

In Aquinas, Albert had a pupil exactly qualified for maturing the instructions received in his School. To carry on the analogy just mentioned, Aquinas was to Albert what Aristotle was to Plato. Aquinas digested the rude plan of Albert, and elaborated the system in its minutest parts. Under Albert, indeed, at Cologne, he exercised the functions of "Master of the Students ;" collecting and reducing to writing the lectures of his master ; so that his mind was

in fact completely formed by the training of Albert.\* He had not that taste for physical pursuits, or that various knowledge for which Albert was distinguished : but his attention was more concentrated on the pure theories of Scholasticism in itself, and their application to Theology. And here he may be said to have surpassed his master. The wonderful perspicuity which, amidst all the subtilties and abstruseness of metaphysical speculation, pervades his celebrated Work entitled the *Sum of Theology*, is enough to establish his superiority in the contrast, as well with Albert, as with any other Scholastic writer, on this particular ground.

### 13. Extreme Reserve and Diffidence of Aquinas.

Whilst a hearer of Albert, Aquinas was content to listen and learn in silence, leaving the

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\* *Frater Thomas magister lecturam studiosè collegit, et redegit in scriptis opus, stylo disertum, subtilitate profundum, sicut a fonte tanti doctoris haurire potuit, qui in scientiâ omnem hominem in sui temporis ætate præcessit.* *Vita S. Th. ap. Act. SS. Mens. Martii*, tom. i. p. 603. Jourdain, *Rech. Crit. sur l'Age et l'Origine des Trad. Lat. d'Aristote*, p. 436. Paris, 1819.

exercise of disputation to others ; both from an extreme reserve and shyness of disposition, and from his devotional employment, which led him to avoid all conversation and concern in affairs of the world. He carried his reserve so far as to incur the reproach of stupidity from some, and even the humorous appellation of "the mute ox," which the massy frame of his limbs rendered the more apposite. But he had an opportunity of showing how little the reproach was merited, when Albert, having heard how he had convinced and silenced some individuals who had presumed to instruct him, called on him to defend a particular opinion on the following day. The dexterity with which he executed this task, reluctant as he was to undertake it, from an excess of diffidence in himself, astonished all present, and extorted from Albert the honourable and characteristic eulogy ; that "the mute ox, as he was called, would one day make the world resound with his roaring."

14. He Lectures at Paris.—Is created Master in  
Theology.

The great Professors of that day did not confine their instructions to one particular place, but went from School to School, as their services might be required. During three years, from 1245 to 1248, Albert filled the Chair of Theology at the College of St. James at Paris. There accordingly he was attended by Aquinas. On the return of Albert to Cologne in 1248, Aquinas accompanied him; and appears to have resided there until 1253, when he returned once 28 more to Paris, and commenced the office of a public lecturer. At the commencement of his lecture, which consisted of an exposition of the *Book of the Sentences*, he had only the degree of Bachelor; but the talent which he displayed so excited the admiration of all, that at the close of his course, he was created Master in Theology; an honour which he accepted, it is said, not without a modest reluctance.\*

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\* There is some difficulty in ascertaining the dates of these circumstances. According to the biography prefixed to his Works, he was twenty-five years of age when he went to

## 15. He settles finally at Naples.

In 1260 he left Paris, and appeared as a Professor of Theology and Philosophy in his native Country ; accompanying the Court of Rome in its successive changes of residence, and teaching at Rome, Bologna, Pisa, and other cities of Italy. At length, in 1272, he proceeded to Naples, where he continued the same course of laborious employment during the remainder of his life.

## 16. His Mental abstractedness.

In the midst of these active labours, his mind, it is said, was still incessantly engaged in religious contemplation, which he regarded as the most real mode of prayer. To such excess did he carry these silent contemplations, that in the midst of society he would sometimes be entirely

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Paris, and obtained the Theological degree. This may have preceded his formal commencement of the duty of a lecturer in Theology. Oudin, in his *Life of Aquinas*, assigns the year 1256 as that in which the degree of Doctor was conferred on him at Paris : a date which is confirmed by the observations of Brucker also, *Hist. Crit. Philos.* tom. iii. p. 800.

*conclusum est contra  
Manicheos !*

lost in mental abstractedness. An instance of this, it is said, occurred in the presence of the King of France ; when, from the vehemence of his interest in an argument pursued in the silence of his own thoughts, he struck the table with his hand, exclaiming, " that the argument ✓ was now conclusive against the Manichees." The ambitious style of Saintly biography has appended also several miraculous stories to the account of his mystical devotion ; such as, that by intensity of contemplation he was, on some occasions so transported out of the world of matter, that his very body, sympathizing with ✓ the elevation of his mind, was raised into the air.

#### 17. General View of the Scholastic Religious Life.

In order, indeed, to arrive at a just estimate of the Religious and Philosophical character of Aquinas, and, in him, of the whole class of Theologians to which he belongs, we should observe him under this point of view more particularly. It is the practical exemplification of the Scholastic Philosophy. As that Philosophy



was a mixture of Heathen and Scriptural truth, so the Religion of the Schoolman was a mixture of two systems of life—the perfect life of the Heathen Philosopher and that of the Christian. From Heathenism were derived all those austerities and privations, and sequestrations of the thoughts and affections from the concerns and sympathies of humanity, so fondly regarded as the highest credentials of purity and sanctity; whilst the more excellent parts of that scheme of life, the devotion to the glory of God, the imitation of the life of Christ, and the fixing of the mind on the things of Eternity, were, as taken in themselves, real constituents of Christian profession. But Christianity nowhere gives the preference to the contemplative life over the practical: on the contrary, it lays its stress on the duty of practical exertion; presenting to us, for our example, one of eminently social disposition and social habits, and who went about doing good, conversing and acting amidst the scenes of human life. But Heathenism has exalted the contemplative life in comparison with the practical. And it naturally did so: its

theory of human happiness required such a view. In that theory, the life of contemplation was the substitute for the Future State which Christianity reveals. The Philosopher beheld in that life the nearest approach to a condition in which the soul is at rest, and where the wicked cease from troubling. Exemption from the active engagements of an evil world, where the force of irregular passions and depraved customs is continually disturbing the tenour of happiness, promised a repose and security which could be found in no other way. The Philosopher, therefore, living entirely in theory, and having no further concern with the world than that which the actual necessities of nature required, was the most truly virtuous, the most truly happy man, according to Heathen views. It followed, too, from this estimate of human happiness, that the peculiarly social affections would sink in importance. At first they would lose their relative force in connexion with the other principles of human nature, in consequence of their not being proportionably exercised. Their indulgence would next come to be regarded as positively sinful; and

then would be created those imaginary virtues of ascetic continence and passive obedience—the living among men, as not a man—as a living instrument, actuated, not by Feeling, but by pure unimpassioned Reason. Such then were the principles engrafted on the Christian self-denial. There is something attractive to the imagination, it must be confessed, in thus living and dying, as it is said, in “the odour of sanctity.” But it is only an illusion of the imagination, which pleases itself, without dwelling on the thought of what is morally right or wrong in the concrete being, man, with the ideal beauty of a superhuman purity and of a heroic, romantic virtue. The mass of human misery which has really been produced by the indulgence in this fond illusion, who can duly estimate? Half of human nature has thus been left without cultivation, and consequently more than half of human happiness has been sacrificed. A penalty not ordained by God has been affixed to certain acts, and a false susceptibility communicated to the conscience. Whilst, therefore, much positive happiness has been missed, from the want of a

due exertion of all the active principles of human nature, much positive misery also has been inflicted, in the waverings and searchings of heart which an unreal code of moral offences has occasioned.

18. Censures of the Monastic System at that time.

The real evils covered under the snow-white mantle of the angelic life of devotional contemplation, did not escape the notice or the censure of some even in that Age, when the fashion of piety was entirely set that way. Indeed, the disregard of parental authority, the breaking of ties of blood and of friendship, which this inhuman Religion produced; the neglect of social duties, the proud humility involved in it; could not pass unobserved. For who, in his heart, could justify the renunciation of family, the fanatical self-devotedness of the young Aquinas, when once he had given himself over to the Religious fraternity? If the constancy and pious feeling of the individual be admired, yet who could approve the spirit of an institution which could so control and pervert the best principles, shaping

the immutable law of right and wrong according to its own arbitrary will. The biographer of Aquinas, in order to magnify the virtue of his hero, has introduced his mother and sisters pathetically remonstrating with him on the act of desertion, and asking whether those could be preachers of peace who could produce so much discord in the bosom of families? The speeches, however, which he puts in their mouths, are the real expressions of the popular indignation against the Monastic Orders. Nor were these complaints without their organs among the Clergy themselves. A Work appears to have been presented to the Pope Clement IV., in which the author freely discussed the merits of the Monastic life, complaining of its inertness and its opposition to the precepts of Scripture. This Work, indeed, Aquinas was called upon to answer; and he succeeded, as we might expect from an effort thus made under the command of the sovereign authority of the Church, in suppressing the obnoxious publication.\*

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\* *Vit. S. Thom. Opera*, ed. Antuerp. 1612.

## 19. Real Bases of the Monastic Institutions.

In truth, the cause of the Monastic institutions did not rest on argument, however ingeniously Aquinas may have defended it. They were a requisition of the times. They were aristocratical, as opening to the higher orders a resource of power and influence ; but there was also a democratical leaven in them, so far as the lowest of the people might be admitted into them, and all as brothers were on a footing of equality. They had, therefore, in their constitution, a principle of conservation. All classes in some measure felt it to be their interest that these Societies should exist. Their vices would sometimes attract indignation, or their follies excite a laugh : but these were transient expressions : the institutions themselves survived these attacks unshaken, at least so long as they rested on the demands of social life.

## 20. Peculiar Claims of the Dominican and Franciscan Orders.

Add to this, that the institution of the Dominican and Franciscan Orders was an effort of

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reformation. The world was scandalized at the luxurious habits and pomp and wealth of the ancient Orders. It occurred to the thoughtful observers of the state of public opinion, that new institutions, professing poverty, and devoted to the active duties of preaching, and the cultivation of Learning and Philosophy, were wanted at such a crisis. And the truth of their calculations was shown in the great popularity which the institutions so framed immediately obtained. It was an infusion of new blood and new life into the decayed body of Monasticism ; and men forgot the innate deformity of the system, in the renovation of energy and active usefulness which it exhibited in its revival.

#### 21. Aquinas refuses all Worldly Dignity.

The situation in which Aquinas now stood was so congenial to his temper, that no offers of promotion to the dignities of his Order or of the Church, could induce him to quit it. Clement IV. would have advanced him to the Archbishopric of Naples. But though his own town of Aquino

had been sacked by the Imperial forces, and his relatives, who had espoused the cause of the Pope, were slain or driven into exile, he could not be prevailed on to receive any accession to his worldly fortunes. Nor would he even accept the station of Abbot of Monte Cassino, which was also offered to him, and which might have seemed more accordant with the tenour of his life. He showed his contempt of all earthly honours and wealth, when on a visit at Paris, his pupils having jocosely observed that the Kingdom of the Gauls was what they wished for him, he replied, "For my part I would rather have the Commentaries ✓ of Chrysostom on Matthew." It was no little complacency in his own peculiar pursuits, which could have dictated such an answer.

## 22. His perspicuous Method of Instruction.

Rome, Paris, and Naples appear to have been the principal scenes of his labours. His lectures were crowded not only with doctors and dignitaries of the Church, but with persons of every class. His teaching is characterised as eminently perspi-



cuons, though proceeding in the established Scholastic method of disputation. For though, as it is observed, he had spent much study on Cicero and other classical writers, he did not think it becoming his modesty to depart from the established method, and adopt a more easy, open style. Such, at least, is the statement of his biographer. But we must express our doubts whether any other form of teaching than that generally adopted in the Schools of the Middle Age would have appeared at all proper, or even have suggested itself, to a mind trained in the Philosophy of that period. The method itself is so closely connected with the Philosophy, that for a writer or lecturer to have followed any other, would surely have appeared a departure from his principles.

### 23. His vast Labours in Composition.

The whole period of his life was included within fifty years, the latter half of which was uninterruptedly devoted to these intellectual labours. How incessantly his mind was occupied in them

is sufficiently evident from the voluminous monuments of them which are yet extant. The mass of accumulated Commentary on various Treatises of Aristotle, of discussion of questions of Philosophy and exposition of Scripture, which compose his Works, is truly astonishing. The printed edition of his Works extends to eighteen volumes 18 in folio. Of these, the first five consist of Commentaries on Aristotle, the remaining volumes being occupied by his *Sum of Theology*, his principal Work, which fills three of the volumes, his Commentary on the *Book of the Sentences*, Commentaries on various Books of Scripture, Sermons, and some smaller Theological tracts. Nor are these the whole of his writings.\* If we may believe his panegyrists, his facility of composition was so great, that he constantly employed four persons to write by his dictation, which was even too rapid for their united labours. Or, if we would follow them in the still greater marvel of

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\* Considerable deduction must be made for the Commentaries of the Cardinal Caietan, appended to his text, for translations of Aristotle accompanying the exposition, and for some additions of writings which are not his. The Antwerp edition of 1612 is the one referred to here.

the story, he could compose himself to rest when exhausted, and still carry on the connexion of his argument unbroken. An ambition seems to actuate the biographer of a Philosopher-Saint, like that of the panegyrists of Mahomet, of magnifying the literary labours of his hero into miraculous effects.

#### 24. His Sickness and Death.

This restless working of the mind at length exhausted the powers of his constitution. He had been invited by Gregory X. to attend the IId Council of Lyons in 1274, in which the disputes constantly agitated with the Greek Church were to be debated, with a view to their settlement. By command of the preceding Pope, he had composed a Work against the Greeks, which he intended to have presented at the Council. But he did not live to attend the Council. He was seized with illness on his journey, and immediately feeling that his end was near, observed to his companion Reginald, who was in constant waiting on him, when, after long reverie, he re-

turned to himself, that "soon he should write no more." Afterwards he became more languid, but rallied again a little, sufficiently to be conveyed on a mule to an adjacent Monastery of the Cistercians. There, on entering the Church, he observed, in the same strain of melancholy anticipation, to Reginald: "Here is my resting-place for ever and ever." The Monks were delighted to receive so distinguished an inmate, and waited on his dying bed with sedulous kindness. He lingered for several days; but they were days in unison with the tenour of his life. He continued conversing with the Monks, and instructing them to the last, and even, at their request, composed, in that extremity, Commentaries on the Canticles of Solomon. He received the Eucharist, prostrating himself on the ground, and exerting his feeble strength to meet the Host. After receiving also the rite of extreme unction with the same devoutness, he calmly expired with a serene countenance; replying just before his departure, to an inquiry from his sister, "whether he had any wish to express," that "soon he should have every wish gratified."

## 25. His Character.—Description of his Person.

Thus died this extraordinary man ; a martyr, we may say, to the spirit of the times in which he lived ; and affording in himself a striking picture of the state of Christianity in that Age. There was in him the gentleness, the modesty, the piety of the Christian character ; but these graceful outlines were dashed with the hard touches of Monastic austerity. He stands forth to our view like the sculptured image of the form of Christianity, executed after the true model, but by some rude hand, ignorant of the principles of taste, and unable to subdue the stubborn marble to a conformity with the living original. His mental endowments and character are not inaptly represented by the description given of his person. His body, it is said, was “almost vast, tall, and massy in the bones, to which the spare flesh scarcely gave a complete covering.” For so was there something gigantic in his mind and his scheme of life, whilst there was a nakedness and dreariness in his studies and contemplative pursuits—a want of substance and

vitality,—truly characteristic of the scholastic Theologian and Philosopher. Nor is the remainder of the portrait out of keeping with the above. “The expression of his eyes,” continues his biographer, “was most modest; his face oblong; his complexion inclined to sallowness; his forehead more depressed than the profoundness of his intellect might seem to require; his head large and round, and partly bald; his person erect.” \*

#### 26. His reputed Sayings.

Some of his sayings have been thought worthy of being recorded. Being asked why he had kept silence so long under Albert, he answered, “Because as yet I knew nothing to say worthy of Albert.” Being asked again what was the most agreeable thing that could happen to him, he answered, “To understand all that I have read.” Some one observed that he was not as learned as he was thought; “It is for that reason I study,” he said, “that men may not be de-

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\* Life prefixed to the edition of his Works. Antwerp, 1612.

ceived." Being reproached for the size of his body; "The cucumber," he said, "also grows without food." Being blamed by a certain matron for avoiding women, when he was himself born of a woman; "This is the very reason," he answered, "because I was born of a woman." To his sister, inquiring what and where Paradise was: "You will know both," he said, "if you only merit it." To persons consulting him how they might escape error: "By doing every thing," he said, "so as to be able to give a reason for the action." Going to visit Bonaventura, and finding his friend employed in writing the Life of St. Francis; "Let us leave," he said, "the Saint to labour for the Saint;" and retired.\* Being led by an importunate brother about the streets of Bologna, until he was exhausted with fatigue, he replied to one who wondered at his patient submission; "By nothing else is Religion perfected but by obedience."

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\* The proper name of Bonaventura was John de Fidanza. He was a native of Tuscany, born in 1221. He became a Cardinal, and died in 1274, during the holding of the 11d Council of Lyons.

27. *Extent of his Fame.—The Friendship between Aquinas and Albert.*

His great reputation during his lifetime attracted to him the notice and favour of the several Pontiffs under whom he flourished. He enjoyed also the patronage of the chivalrous and sainted King of France, Louis IX., who highly esteemed him both for his learning and his counsels. A Work addressed by him to the King of Cyprus on the Government of Princes, shows still further the extent of his fame. He was frequently applied to for counsel in difficulties by various persons throughout Europe. So much was the recluse Monk, living out of the world by profession, familiarly known to the world of his day : and so great must have been the influence really exercised by him, amidst his formal renunciation of all human concerns. Amongst his friends, of whom he had several warmly attached to him, he particularly honoured Albert, whose name from a feeling of respect, it is said, he would never expressly mention in any discussion of his opinions. The legend says, that



so great was the union of friendship between these two, that Albert being at dinner at Cologne at the time when Aquinas expired, felt a secret intimation of the event; for that rising with tears in his eyes from the table, and being asked by the persons present the cause of his distress, he informed them that Thomas Aquinas, the light of the Church, and his dearest friend, was dead. Albert too, it is added, so approved the doctrines of his favourite disciple, and felt so great an interest in his reputation, as to have undertaken a journey to Paris, in his eightieth year, to defend Aquinas from the attacks of Theological opponents.\*

#### 28. Miracles attributed to Aquinas.

But great as his reputation was during life, it was increased ten-fold after his death. It was then cherished as the property of a rival party

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\* In 1277. Albert died at Cologne, Nov<sup>r</sup>. 15, 1280, at the age of eighty-seven. He was also, like Aquinas, of noble family. Jourdain, *Rech. Crit. sur l'Age et l'Origine des Trad. Lat. d'Arist.* p. 332.

in the Church. The interest of the Dominican Order was engaged in setting forth the heroism and the Philosophy of their own brother to the greatest advantage. Hence the miraculous attestations which are alleged to have been given to his sanctity and the truth of his doctrines. The question of the Immaculate Conception which divided the Dominicans and Franciscans, made each party solicitous about maintaining their ground in the popular favour. Arguments might suffice, as addressed to each other, to learned and philosophising Theologians; but other means of persuasion were required with the mass of believers. This is evident in the introduction of accounts of miracles confirmatory of their doctrines, both in the Life of Aquinas, and in the counterpart on the Franciscan side, the Life of John Duns Scotus. They are not merely the miracles of the ordinary legend, but miracles intended to bear on the truth of their doctrines. To John Duns Scotus, the marble statue of the Virgin bows its head, as he offers a prayer before it, on his way to the place where he is to hold his triumphant disputation in favour

of the Immaculate Conception.\* To Thomas Aquinas, not only the Apostle Paul gives an express sanction to the Saint's interpretation of his Epistles, but the Virgin and even Jesus Christ himself, speaking through the mouth of their images, confirm the Saint's exposition of doctrine, by the declaration, *Bene scripsisti de me Thoma.*

#### 29. His Canonization.

The honours of canonization conferred by John XXII. in the year 1323, and the assignment to him of the rank of Vth Doctor of the Church, were the fruits of the same struggle. The honours given to a Dominican were paralleled on the other side by the like declarations in favour of Bonaventura, a Franciscan. And as Aquinas was styled in the phraseology of those days, the Angelic Doctor, so, on the other hand, the title of the Seraphic Doctor was assigned to Bonaventura.

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\* *J. Duns Scoti Vit. a Luc. Wadding. Scoti Oper. tom. i.*

## 30. Triumph of his Doctrines in the Church.

But the Theology of Aquinas triumphed in the end. The repeated declarations of Popes that his writings were perfect, without any error whatever, gave a sanction to them which perpetuated their authority in the Church and in the Schools. The intrinsic merits, indeed, of his *Sum of Theology*, in comparison with every other composition of the Scholastic Age, secured for that Work the high estimation in which it has been constantly held. But the fact of his having represented more closely the doctrines of Augustine, the great authority of the Latin Church, on the questions of Grace and Predestination, than the rival Philosopher of the Franciscans, John Duns Scotus, is quite reason enough to account for his more extensive and permanent popularity in the Church.

# PHILOSOPHY OF AQUINAS

AND

## THE SCHOOLMEN.

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### 1. Uniform Character of the Scholastic Philosophy.

As we remarked, at the commencement of our observations on the Life of Aquinas, the invariableness of character in the different Philosophers of the Schools is the point to which we would first direct attention, in order to arrive at just views of the nature of the Scholastic Philosophy. The uniform aspect of their biography and their Philosophy is equally remarkable, when we compare them with the eminent men of any other period of Literary History. Take, for instance, Socrates, Plato, Xenophon, Aristotle, all, we may say, trained in the same method, and nearly contemporary : and yet how different is the character both of their lives and of their Philosophy ! We see in them all the variety of original minds ; the later, indeed, versed in the systems of the former,

but yet striking out a path for themselves, and throwing into their speculations the peculiarities of their own turn of thought and of their respective condition of life. But compare Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, John Duns Scotus, William Ockam, the four most eminent in the annals of Scholasticism, and to whom we may most properly refer as illustrations of its spirit and form, and we observe only an expansion and working out of the same ideas, in Ockam the last in the succession, which we find in Albert the first. There may be minor differences in parts; the conclusions at which they arrive are sometimes directly opposed. But still it is one note that we hear sounding through all. One might think that it was some mechanical process by which the several elaborate systems of these authors had been constructed: so little evidence is there in them of the vitality of human nature; of their Works having been composed by men each of whom had his own feelings, his own views, his own temper and prejudices.

2. This Uniformity the general idea of the System.

Proceeding then from the uniformity of Scholasticism as the most general idea of its nature, we shall the more easily fall into that train of speculation which the Philosophy of the Schools exhibits. We commonly hear this Philosophy spoken of as dark and subtle, and intricate ; and indeed the words "Scholastic subtilty," "Scholastic trifling," are in the mouths of every one. But these are merely declamatory expressions, and give us no proper general description of its character. They denote qualities which accidentally belong to Scholasticism, and which are the consequences of its fundamental idea ; modes of proceeding to which it was led by the principle on which it took its rise. The uniformity which pervades it, is, as we have said, the most faithful representation of that principle. This is its real characteristic as it is distinguished from all other scientific methods which have engaged the attention of mankind. The explanation and account of that uniformity will be the great object of our present inquiry. This will lead us to just notions of the method

pursued by Aquinas and his brother Philosophers, and of the nature of that system in itself.

### 3. Constitution of the Latin Schools.

If we revert to the character of the Schools of the Middle Ages, we shall find a tendency in those institutions to impress one unvarying form on the mental constitution of those educated in them. They were not founded with a view to the enlargement of the mind, to the cultivation and improvement of the intellectual and moral principles, for their own sake, in order to the perfect development of the human being. But they were designed for a particular object ; to render those trained in them more fit instruments for the Civil or Ecclesiastical power. We have only to read the regulations of the Theodosian Code concerning the students at Rome, in A. D. 370, to form an idea of the spirit of those institutions. The strictest supervision, we find, was exercised in regard to the studies pursued and the disposal of their time ; the Emperor requiring a report to be sent to him every year of those admitted, that he might know the merits of each, and employ them



in offices of public business suitable to their talents.\* Nor were they permitted to remain at Rome beyond a certain age : the object being, probably, to disperse them through the Provinces of the empire, and diffuse the benefits of Roman civilization. The Latin language, by a wise policy, being retained throughout the Empire, as the language of public business, the institution of the Schools was directed to the cultivation of a knowledge of that Language, and a study, consequently, of Latin authors. Provision, indeed, was made for the study of Greek Literature, but it appears to have formed only a subordinate object of the schools of the Western Empire, more as the accomplishment, than as the business, of the Student. In the East, where Greek civilization was in action at the time of the Roman conquests, Greek continued to be spoken and studied, both as a vernacular Tongue, and as the sacred idiom of Poetic and Philosophic inspiration. But in the West, the legions of Rome had to carry the civilization of Rome into barbarian regions.

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\* *Codex Theodos.* lib. xiv. tit. 9. *Bulæi Hist. Acad. Paris*, tom. i. p. 76, 77.

They had to mould and refine the rough materials which the sword had carved out. This part of the Empire, therefore, was more completely assimilated to Rome. It exhibited, consequently, what we may call a Latin nationality ; and the Eastern and Western portions of the Empire became contradistinguished as the Greek and Latin Worlds. A Roman policy has hence been impressed on the Schools of the West, and has survived with that durability which characterises the conceptions of Roman genius, through the long night of the Middle Ages of European History. The Latin Language and Literature, and a limited practical subserviency of the studies pursued, are the prominent features of those schools, wherever they may have flourished, whether in France, or Italy, or Spain, or Africa, or the British Islands. The great regeneration of the human mind consummated in the reform of Religion, has, in fact, only modified and improved these fundamental characteristics of the education of the Western World. The original Scholastic form has not been obliterated ; as we may see in the circumstance alone of the importance which the Latin

Language still holds in the Schools and Universities of Modern Europe.

4. Transition of the Schools into the hands of  
Ecclesiastics.

But why do we direct attention to the original constitution of the Schools of the West? It is because it contains in it the germ of that principle, which afterwards developed itself in the system of Philosophy called Scholasticism. The Latin Church, growing over the ruins of the Roman Empire, succeeded to the policy and power of the Civil ruler. The maintenance of the Latin Theology became accordingly the immediate limited object to which the Schools, now passed into the hands of Ecclesiastics, would be directed. Men expert in fighting the battles of the Lord, skilful in defending each disputed point, and in parrying the assaults of the Heretic, were the kind of persons which the method of teaching pursued in the Schools would particularly contemplate. There would be no desire on the part of the Latin Churchmen to encourage a freedom of inquiry, or a wide range over the field of

Literature ; the adventurer in such a track might be dangerous to the repose of the Church ; might break that chain of dependence which bound the subject-people to the chair of spiritual authority. Only such a discipline of the intellect would be provided as should sharpen and strengthen without emboldening it ; render it apt to object, to discuss, to infer, without tempting it to spread forth Dædalean wings, and soar above the labyrinth in which it was immured.

#### 5. Effects of Studies confined to Books.

A commenting Literature, and a second-hand Philosophy, naturally became the burthen of the lessons taught in Schools so constituted, both under their Heathen and their Christian administration. The invention of Works of original genius was foreign to their purpose. The Roman Literature, indeed, was essentially derivative. The spirit of the Republic in the busy period when it was occupied in the acquisition of its Empire, was averse to the soft influence of letters : and a great people found itself the mistress of the World, and in a high state of civili-

zation, with no domestic Philosophy, and scarcely any domestic Literature. In this state of the case, when the leisure of the people demanded the gratification of Literature, recourse was necessarily had to the stores of a foreign Tongue : and the learned Greek was sought by the studious Roman as the interpreter of the Language and Philosophy of Greece. Thus the learning from books was the expedient to which the literary Roman was necessarily driven. And this led further to the rise and employment of Commentators ; to the study, in short, of the instrument of knowledge in combination with the subject explored, and at length to the use of the mere books as an end of study in themselves. When the Schools assumed an Ecclesiastical character, this restricted mode of teaching would only be more fully established. The very low estimation in which all Heathen Literature was held by some of the primitive Fathers, the reprobation, indeed, often cast on it, and the mistaken jealousy with which it was regarded as a rival to Christianity, would contract, instead of extending, the range of studies. Further, Christianity im-

posing on its disciples the study of a book, the sacred records in which its own truths are deposited, the Christian student would be led to seek his instruction analogously in other subjects from books also ; and his Learning, consequently, would consist principally of an interpretation of books.

6. Increasing Ignorance of the Greek Language.

The same reason which induced the Emperors to make the Latin the Language of Government and of Civil intercourse throughout the Empire, would operate no less strongly with the leaders of the Church. The Scriptures being at an early period translated into Latin, were in that form as an original to the Latin world : the knowledge of Greek declining more and more in the West ; to such a degree that, at the close of the IVth Century of the Christian Era, Jerome was perhaps a single exception of a Latin Father competently acquainted with the Greek Language. It would evidently be an important point with the Church leaders, to obtain from all parts of their communion a confession of the same doctrines in

the same words. We know what opening is afforded by the translation of expressions of one Language into the corresponding ones of another to vary the sense ; or rather how impossible it is to transfuse precisely the same ideas without any addition or diminution, from the terms of one Language into those of another. This, indeed, was felt particularly during the agitation of the early controversies of the Church. The Greek would insist that the Latin should confess in his phraseology, and the Latin was peremptory in resisting, on finding that the terms imposed by the Greek conveyed to his ear a sense which he could not admit. The desire, therefore, of preserving a uniformity of doctrine suggested the necessity of keeping up a knowledge of the Latin Language, as the idiom of Theology, and, with a view to Theology, of all Literature in the Church, wherever the spiritual power had the rule.

#### 7. Effect of Translations.

Translations into Latin of the works of Greek authors were accordingly the principal, if not the

only methods by which those authors were studied in the Schools of the West. It is obvious that such a method would lower the standard of knowledge. It brought the range of studies immediately under the control of the heads of the Church. Those who from their superior learning or talent in governing, were called to the station of command in the Church, were enabled to select those portions of the Greek Literature which might answer their own confined views, and detain the mind of the student on these exclusively. The consequence was that many valuable Treatises of the Greek Philosophy were neglected, and some were forgotten in the Western Schools. Nothing appears to have contributed more than this circumstance to that desolate, barren state, in which we find the Latin Schools in the Centuries subsequent to the IVth, which have proverbially obtained the name of the Dark Ages. The irruption of Barbarians and the miserable state of society, doubtless aggravated the darkness which then spread over Europe. But the seeds of ignorance were sown in the system itself. The



wildness and fury of the elements raging without, will not account for that jejune and frivolous erudition, which overran the very soil itself of the fields of knowledge during this period. We see, however, a sufficient reason for it, in the intrinsic narrowness of the mode of education subsisting in the Schools, in the circumstances of there being no proper Latin Literature, amidst the neglect of the study of the Greek, and the restriction of the attention of thinking men to certain Works existing in Latin translations.

#### 8. Effect of Commentaries.

Besides this, the need of Commentaries to explain the text of an author, when he is read as the writer of another Age and another Country, gave occasion for further limiting the views of students. For soon the original text of the author would scarcely be read : the labour would be spent on the Commentary : and only such Works would be read as were illustrated by Commentaries. And thus in process of time an artificial, microscopic Literature would grow up,

wanting entirely the raciness and spirit of original composition, and encumbering the understanding with its molecular accumulations. Such was the result, in fact ; as a glance over any page of the Scholastic Literature will readily make appear to every one. The explanation of the sense of the author commented upon is the utmost aim of the expositor : his highest ambition is to show what his author means under every possible light, or to elicit out of his assertions a multiplicity of subordinate propositions.

#### 9. Unphilosophical Nature of the Latin Language.

The unphilosophical nature of the Latin Language was in itself a fatal impediment to the vigour of philosophical studies, when that Language came to be employed as the sole medium of intellectual cultivation. Its utter inadequacy to express the subtle abstractions of the Greek Philosopher was the means of perverting in great measure the truth of Science ; and not unfrequently indeed of engrafting materialism on

the metaphysical ideas of the Greek, when they came to be represented in Latin phraseology.

10. Scholasticism the result of this Method of Education.

The same method of education, carried to its full extent, developed itself at length in the proper form of Scholasticism. Nothing was wanting for this result but to direct the attention of the student to certain subjects, and certain Treatises on those subjects. And this was naturally the next step taken. It is by observing the stages of this progress, that we shall arrive at correct views of the peculiar Philosophy of the Schools.

11. Scholasticism an inversion of the Natural Progress of Knowledge.

But first it becomes matter of inquiry, why it should have resulted in establishing a particular philosophical system, rather than in forming a particular School of Literature in general. Now this will appear, if we consider that Philosophy is the ultimate growth of a people's intellectual progress. Where a people passes through the

regular transitions from an infancy to a maturity of intellectual cultivation, Poetry and the Fine Arts at first engage their attention: the taste is formed before the powers of judgment and reasoning are wrought to their severe perfection. This appears from the case of Greece, where we have the instance of a people forming for themselves, by successive original efforts, their own intellectual character. Their genius threw itself forth in its native Poetry: and their Temples, their Statues, and their Pictures, proclaimed its graceful vigour, before the bowers of Academus or the Lyceum resounded with the hum of their Philosophy. This then is the natural progress of things; the natural course of the education of a people. But in the case of the Latin World, as we here designate that part of the Roman Empire which was united into a social mass by Roman civilization, the intellectual character first developed itself in Philosophy: the first great movement was to that which is the last properly in the order of Nature. But the fact explains itself when we look into it more closely. The Schools of the Middle Age received in a

mass the accumulated treasures of antiquity. They invented nothing for themselves : the riches of Poetry, Eloquence, and Philosophy were poured out on them in lavish profusion. At the same time, there was no capacity for appreciating the relative value of the several acquisitions of knowledge. At this crisis, however, polemical disputation called upon the Heads of the Christian Church, to acquaint themselves with the theories of that Philosophy, from which the Infidel or the Heretic drew his attacks on Christianity. The necessity was felt of opposing Philosophy with Philosophy. Hence, from the earliest Ages, Christianity is spoken of by the Fathers, as a *Philosophy* ; and is strenuously maintained to be the only true Philosophy of life, as contrasted with that of Heathen Sages. Whilst the Poetry, therefore, and History, and Eloquence of the Classic Authors were held in contempt, as comparatively unworthy of attention from the Christian, the pages of the Philosopher were eagerly explored, in order to an acquaintance with those principles which were brought into competition with Christianity. And thus,

unhappily, the Christian Schools reversed the natural order of the education of the human mind, rushing all at once to an end, legitimately attainable only by the fruit of matured habits of thought, and the discipline of all the faculties of the mind. Their Philosophy consequently was an insincere, unreal system ; a collection of principles, the data not of investigation and experience, but of a prescriptive authority ; the results of the labour and ingenuity of others taken in their concrete form without analysis, and applied as oracular texts for the deduction of truths.

#### 12. Logic studied as an Art of Polemics.

But not only were Works of Philosophy the principal objects of attention to the Christian student, as containing theories of Science, but also, and more especially, as an instruction in the *method* of polemical defence. The disputers against Christianity were found to possess an acute science of argument, by which they could give a plausibility either to their objections or their heretical speculations. The multitude of

believers was open to seduction from the true Faith through the arts of the skilful dialectician, who could often make the worse appear the better view of an opinion or doctrine. The possibility of converting the same instrument to the support of the sacred cause of Christianity and Christian orthodoxy, was obvious. The questionings indeed of the Faithful themselves, which we know from Ecclesiastical History to have arisen on almost every point of doctrine on various occasions, admitting often of no direct answer, required an ingenious solution, so that the difficulty might at least be *staved off*, (if we may so express it,) might be removed a step beyond that at which the questionist had taken his stand. Thus the necessity of combating the Infidel or Heretic with his own arms, and of providing the Christian advocate with a casuistical Theology, such as should meet all the emergencies of doubt and difficulty in the Christian community, made the study of works of dialectical Science,—the Logic of the ancient Schools,—imperative in the course of Christian education. Hence recourse was had to the great master of

that Science among the Philosophers of Greece ; and the Works of Aristotle, at first reprobated as atheistical and impious, obtained a practical value, which soon bore down all speculative opposition to them, and exalted that Philosopher to the pre-eminence in the Scholastic system.

13. An Eclectic, Logical Philosophy the result.

The combination of these two objects,—the necessity of an acquaintance with the theories of ancient Philosophy in themselves, and of acquiring an art of polemical defence,—produced in the result an Eclectic, Logical Philosophy, as the peculiar system of the Schools of the Middle Age. To explain the nature of this Logical Philosophy will be to develop the fundamental principles of Scholasticism.

14. Platonism first cherished in the Church.

We must observe, then, that Platonism was the established Philosophy of the Church in the primitive Ages of Christianity. The first converts to the Gospel from the class of Philosophers



appear to have been of that Sect; and these brought with them into their new professions, a predilection for the theories which they had only formally renounced in embracing the Gospel. Though the accommodation then attempted to be made between truths of Religion and theories of Philosophy awakened a just alarm in the minds of many, yet the devout and sublime tone of Platonism softened down the opposition of the pious, and won them over as by a syren-song in despite of themselves. Thus we find Augustine, the great Father of Latin orthodoxy, commending and approving the Platonists, as the only Philosophers who had spoken fitly of divine things and of human nature; and in describing his own conversion to Christianity, mentioning the advantages he had derived from reading their writings.

15. Insufficiency of Platonism.—Aristotle's Philosophy supplies the Defect.

Platonism, accordingly, we may say, was the original orthodox Philosophy of the Church, so far as the Church owned itself philosophical. We see this very strikingly in the early contro-

versies of the Church, when the speculations, both of the Heretic and of the Orthodox, drawn fundamentally from the theories of Platonism, corrupted the pure truth of the Trinitarian doctrine with the subtle alloy of a refined materialism. So firm was the hold which Platonism had on the Church, from the veneration paid to the great men of its early history who had professed their admiration of that system, and from its having been incorporated with various expositions of Christian Truth, that it was impossible to substitute any other Philosophy in its place, even had any such design existed in the Schools of the Middle Age. Still that Philosophy did not suffice for the whole state of the case. It presented, indeed, the means of speculating on the truths of Christianity, and explaining them to the satisfaction of speculative men: but it was deficient as a *method* of investigation and argument. It was only a vast collection of theories. Such, however, was not the case with the Philosophy of Aristotle. This was essentially a science of methods. Aristotle had analyzed the principles of human knowledge, examining into

the nature of Language, as the instrument of communicating knowledge, and delivering with accuracy and fulness the means of producing persuasion and conviction. This was observed to be eminently the characteristic of a large portion of Aristotle's Works, that collection of Logical Treatises to which Moderns have given the name of the *Organon*; whilst throughout his Works a methodical character marks them in contrast with the rhetorical diffuseness and irregularity of Plato. Thus was the Christian student invited to the study of the Logic of Aristotle; and thus too has the name of Aristotle been identified with that of Logical Philosopher. An imperfect Logic, indeed, was already taught, drawn from the Stoic School, which being more accordant with the degenerate Philosophy of the later days of Greece, had superseded that of Aristotle. But the Heretics of the II<sup>nd</sup> and III<sup>rd</sup> Centuries had infested the citadel of Orthodoxy with missiles furnished from the dialectical armoury of Aristotle himself. And this circumstance, whilst it excited a strong prejudice against the Philosophy of Aristotle in

general,—for the heresy of his readers was imputed to the system of the Philosopher,—pointed out to the Orthodox, at the same time, the resources for improving their own argumentative power.

16. Objections of Platonizing Christians to Aristotle.

The disciples of Plato in the Church strenuously opposed the introduction of Aristotle's Philosophy, not only as Churchmen, but as Philosophers. They had carried to an extreme the very doctrine in the system of Plato, which Aristotle had impugned with the severity of his powerful reasoning. They were, therefore, still more strongly opposed to Aristotle than the original School of the Academy. The theory of Ideas was, according to Plato, the cardinal point of all Truth ; so far as the Ideas were the abstract intellectual realities from which all objects of the sensible universe derived their existence. But according to the interpretation of his doctrines adopted by his Alexandrian followers, and through them current in the Christian Church, the Ideas were the eternal reasons of things as

they are contemplated by the Divine Intellect. The Philosophy of Aristotle, entirely destitute of anything like enthusiasm, possessing no attraction for the imaginative and the mystic, seemed to those already enamoured of the pleasing reveries of Platonism, a cold, atheistical system that tied down the intellect to the mere things of sense, depriving it of its high and ennobling contemplations of the Divine Being.\*

17. *Logical Treatises of Aristotle exclusively Studied.*

Hence we may account for the entire neglect into which all other portions of Aristotle fell, except the Logical Treatises. These were neutral in the matter of Theology. They contained the rules of a universal method, equally applicable to all subjects. They coincided, however, with the system of the Platonists, inasmuch as that was in itself an application of the Philosophy of Language to the interpretation of Nature. Plato, indeed, had assigned the name of Dialectic

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\* The existence of a Work attributed to Justin Martyr, entitled *Eversio Aristotelicorum Dogmatum*, is an evidence to this point.

to the highest Philosophy, a description which prepared the way for the transformation of it into the Logical Philosophy of the Schools. Thus were the two systems, the Platonic and the Aristotelic, imperceptibly blended together. The Aristotelic, repulsive in its dryness of methodical discussion, and disappointing to the religious feelings of the heart, obtained a support in the enthusiasm of Platonism : whilst Platonism, too imaginative in its own unmixed nature, too evanescent in its abstractions for the herd of Philosophers, descended to conversation with men of humble genius, and combated the religious disputant with reasonings drawn from the practical Philosophy of the Peripatetic School.

18. Union of Mysticism with an Argumentative Spirit  
the result.

This union of the two systems was never indeed completely effected until the mature period of the Scholastic Philosophy which was the result of it ; until the period, that is, of Albert the Great and Aquinas, in the middle of the XIIIth Century. In the mean time, we may see the two streams

running together, sometimes joined in one channel, sometimes receding from each other. We clearly recognise, as we cast the eye over the page of Ecclesiastical History, two classes of Theologians, the Mystic and the Argumentative ; the representatives of each of the two combined Philosophies, and each representing that combination in process. For the Mystic is Argumentative ; and the Argumentative betrays a tendency to mysticism : both, in fact, working on partial, undeveloped views of one and the same principle—that very Scholasticism to which their labours separately tended. The Mystic, indeed, as the representative of the original Church Philosophy, is found continually charging on the argumentative Theologian the heresy of his Logic ; but the Logician, on the other hand, as the innovator, so far from retorting the censure of mysticism on his opponent, is anxious to show his own contemplative spirit amidst all the rigour and homeliness of his reasonings. These struggles for ascendancy between the Platonic and Aristotelic systems, antecedently to their perfect union in Scholasticism, identified themselves with

the conflicts which have ever existed in the human mind, and which the condition of the Church in the Middle Age greatly fomented, between Faith and Reason, and Authority and Reason. Soon the Mystics arrogated to themselves the dignity and merit of supporting the Faith as handed down by the Fathers in its divine simplicity, whilst the Logicians were characterised as the impugnors of authority and asserters of Reason against Revelation. Both however were, as we have said, urging forward the same principle, the construction of a divine Philosophy, in which Faith and Reason, Authority and Reason, should meet together and coalesce. The Mystics accomplished this by internal processes of the intellect, pursuing the Ideas of Divine truth by an imaginary spiritualization of the thoughts to the utmost abstractedness from the world. The Logical Theologian only more avowedly trod the same path, pursuing the same ideas by the scientific methods of definition, analysis, and argument.



19. Augustine and Boethius the Leaders in forming the System.—John Scotus Erigena.

The two great leaders in the formation of this system were Augustine, at the close of the IVth Century and commencement of the Vth, and Boethius about a century afterwards. Augustine, as a venerated head of the Church, whose voice was received as decisive of all points of controversy, set the example in his own writings of a speculative Theology, in which the truths of Revelation were subjected to argumentative discussion. Whilst his authority overruled the refractory reasonings of heresy, he established by the course of his own disputations, orthodox principles of religious speculation. Still in Augustine the Theologian prevailed over the Philosopher. In Boethius, on the contrary, Philosophy was supreme. This may be seen in his well-known Treatise *On the Consolation of Philosophy*; in which it is not Christianity, but Philosophy, that whispers peace to the troubled soul, and pours the balm into its wounds. This excellent and great man formed the patriotic de-

sign of laying a broad basis of Latin Philosophy, by transfusing the stores of Greek wisdom into the Latin Language. His project was vast beyond the powers of any single agent, however energetic. Though, however, he accomplished but little in the way of translation, his exertions were fully instrumental in introducing to the Latin world that Eclectic method of Philosophy, which afterwards ripened into Scholasticism. This Eclectic method, having for its express object, to establish a concord between Plato and Aristotle,\* was the ultimate form which the Greek Philosophy had received in the School of Athens, where Boethius himself had imbibed it.

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\* *Ego omne Aristotelis opus quodcumque in manus venerit, in Romanum styllum vertens, eorum omnium commenta Latinâ oratione præscribam; ut si quid ex Logicæ Artis subtilitate, et ex moralis gravitate peritiæ, et ex naturalis acumine veritatis, ab Aristotele conscriptum est, id omne ordinatum transferam; atque id quodam lumine commentationis illustrem; omnesque Platonis Dialogos vertendo, vel etiam commentando, in Latinam redigam formam. His paratis, non equidem contempserim Aristotelis Platonisque sententias in unam quodammodo revocare concordiam, et in his eos, non ut plerique dissentire in omnibus, sed in plerisque quæ sunt in Philosophiâ maxime consentire, demonstram, &c. Boethius, Comment. in lib. de Interpretatione.*

It was, however, but imperfectly maintained through the centuries intermediate to the Age of Boethius and that of Albert and Aquinas. During this period, when Philosophy began at length once more to emerge from the pressure of Ecclesiastical authority, speculative men were engaged in endeavouring to resume the thread of their lost Philosophy, and in making desultory experimental efforts. The first great effort was that of the celebrated John Scotus Erigena in the IXth Century. And this is characterised, as we might have expected, by a wild metaphysical mysticism ; such as the religious spirit of the preceding Ages would have suggested to a philosophic mind, anxiously seeking to think for itself, yet encumbered with the heavy armour of a severe ecclesiastical authority. A mind so circumstanced finds its relief in explaining away, by principles of Philosophy, the opinions imposed on its passive belief ; and instead of simply making Reason subservient to the defence and exposition of doctrines, overwhelms the sacred truth with the officiousness of its speculation. The mixed system accordingly, compounded of the Philoso-

phies of Plato and Aristotle, degenerated, in the hands of Erigena, from the more sober method of the Athenian School, into the wild enthusiasm of the Platonism of Alexandria. Others again, as Anselm of Canterbury in the XIth Century, exemplified more of the Aristotelic character : whilst Abelard seems to vibrate between the two elements of the combination,—a Platonist where he professedly teaches Theology ; a disciple of the Aristotelic School in the rigour and positiveness of his abstract reasonings.

20. Influence of Arabian Literature.—Gerbert.

The confusion and misery prevailing in the West during the Xth Century produced a retrograde movement in the condition of Literature. The feudal anarchy which then desolated a large portion of Christendom, threw the labourer in the field of Science on the resources supplied by the Arabian Literature of those times. The only conspicuous name which emerges out of the storms and clouds of this period, to preserve the tradition of Latin Philosophy, is that of Gerbert, whose reputation for learning cast a lustre on the

Papal throne to which he was elevated under the title of Sylvester II. He, it appears, was chiefly indebted to the Arabian Philosophers of Spain for that Learning which rendered him the prodigy of his Age. The Arabians, studious of physical and mathematical Science, had cultivated an acquaintance with portions of Aristotle's Philosophy, which had been neglected in the West,—the physical and metaphysical Treatises. By the aid of these they had elaborated an artificial Theurgic system, subsidiary to the imaginary processes of Magic and Alchemy. From them the Christian Schools in the West derived that bias towards notions of Pantheism which is shown in the speculations of the XIth and XIIth Centuries. A system drawn from Commentators on Aristotle was naturally confounded, in the ignorance of those times, with the Philosophy of Aristotle himself. Hence was occasioned a still greater opposition to the reception of his writings. We find in the XIIth Century "the books of David de Dinant, and Amalric, and Maurice the Spaniard," which taught the Pantheistic system of the Arabians, expressly reprobated by Papal

decrees, and with them, in the same sentence, the physical and metaphysical writings of Aristotle.\* But Albert and Aquinas, by a more enlarged study of the Works of Aristotle, removed that prejudice which the association of Arabian notions with his system of Nature had engendered. They laboured against that sequaciousness of the Arabian Science, which speculating Christians had displayed. Aquinas more particularly, as the less addicted to physical inquiry, tended to give right views of the nature of Aristotle's Philosophy, and by his exposition of it to establish it in the Church, and thus restore that original Eclectic Philosophy of which Boethius had set the example to the Latins.

#### 21. Importance of the Treatise of the Categories.

At first then, we should observe, when Aristotle was united with Plato in the Church system, it

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\* *Non legantur libri Aristotelis de Metaphysicâ et de Naturali Philosophiâ, nec summæ de iisdem, aut de doctrinâ magistri David de Dinant, aut Amalrici hæretici, aut Mauricii Hispani. Launoii de Var. Aristot. Fortunâ in Acad. Paris. Bulæi Hist. Acad. Paris, tom. iii. p. 82.*

was only the Logical treatises of Aristotle that were studied. Of these, that entitled *The Categories*, or the *Predica*, was the chief object of attention, and soon the exclusive one. Logic, indeed, being studied with a view to polemics, was necessarily very imperfectly studied. The elementary theory of the Science, that which lays the foundation of it in the nature of Language, principally attracted notice. For that which engaged the attention of controversialists was the extent of signification of terms, the differences of the several notions included in them, and their exact definition. This was the kind of Science chiefly required in order to Theological disputation. It was important to be able to defend certain expressions in the enunciation of doctrines, or to exclude others brought forward by the heretic,—to remove alleged consequences by distinctions,—and to state in explicit terms the notions embraced in any particular dogmatic expression. Hence we find that portion of the *Organon* of Aristotle, which was most applicable to this purpose, principally, or rather exclusively, studied until the XIIIth Century. Other Logical Trea-

tises of Aristotle besides the *Categories* existed in Latin translations. But these, as John of Salisbury, writing in the XIIth Century, indignantly complains, were quite disused in his time ;\* and no Logic was tolerated in the Schools, but such as was conversant about the mere technicalities of the sterile Art then professed. To state the truth, indeed, Aristotle himself, though the name of Aristotle was in the mouths of all the reasoners of the Middle Age as that of the great Master of their Art, was absolutely unknown to them. Abstracts drawn from translations and comments of the IVth, Vth, and VIth Centuries had superseded the originals, even on the narrow ground to which his Logical Science had been reduced.

22. Maturity of Scholasticism seen in Aquinas—  
John Duns Scotus—William Ockam.

To judge then of the true internal character of Scholasticism, we must view it at that point of its progress where those principles which

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\* *Metalogicus*, lib. iii. c. 5, p. 859.



presided over its formation were at length fully developed ; at the period, that is, of Thomas Aquinas, who is eminently the Philosopher of the Schools, the creature of the system which had then obtained its full strength. We see in him that acuteness which the polemical spirit had fostered in the Church ; that narrowness which the limited range of studies had necessarily engendered ; that servility to authority which the magisterial power of the Latin Church had engraved on the mind of the pious votary ; that boldness of speculation at the same time, which Philosophical talents, pent up within the barriers of a technical Logic and Metaphysics, would naturally acquire, and by which they would, however imperfectly, assert their conscious dignity and vigour. After Aquinas there is evidently a decline in the character of Scholasticism. There were not wanting men of considerable power of mind to carry on the system. It is enough to mention the names of John Duns Scotus and William Ockam ; names indeed well nigh forgotten in these days, particularly in this Country, from the darkness which the reforma-

tion of Philosophy and Religion has spread over their volumes, but by no means meriting that silence into which they have fallen. Hooker indeed has honoured Scotus with the appellation of "the wittiest of the School Divines."\* But Ockam especially ought never to be forgotten among those who prepared the way for the improved Science of the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries ; as having inculcated by his Logical theory the unjustly vilified doctrine of the Nominalists, and so far led men from that exclusive devotion to mere abstractions which Scholasticism had taught, to look also to experience for information and science. But in depicting the form of Scholasticism, we must pronounce both these eminent men far inferior to Aquinas, as representatives of its genuine features at its maturity. They present its features rather under distortion and caricature ; the less graceful characteristics being magnified to an undue proportion, though but slightly varied from the original outlines. In them and in the later Schoolmen

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\* *Eccl. Polity*, book i. c. 11.

generally, down to the period of the Reformation, there is more of the parade of Logic, a more formal enumeration of arguments, a more burthensome importunity of syllogizing, with less of the philosophical power of arrangement and distribution of the subject discussed. The dryness again inseparable from the Scholastic method is carried to excess in the later writers ; and perspicuity of style is altogether neglected. The patient Schoolman of the latter Age, plods his way through the desert sands of his journey, with all the alacrity of a traveller through the most picturesque country ; careless, as it would seem, who may follow him, so he may himself reach the given point. The same faults exist in Aquinas : but in him they are rendered less offensive by his greater art in the management of the method of disputation. It is not, perhaps, saying too much, to give him the praise of even exciting interest in his reader ;—no small merit, when we think of the intrinsic repulsiveness of the method itself. To refer more particularly to his greatest Work, his *Sum of Theology*, the admirable order which reigns throughout it, the regular suc-

cession of the several Questions adduced for discussion, and the combination of the mass of particulars into one whole,—certainly impart an attractiveness to the Work, of which, on the first superficial examination of its contents, it would seem utterly incapable.

23. Character of Peter Lombard's *Book of the Sentences*.

These remarks should be extended, on the other side, to the immediate predecessors of Aquinas, Peter Lombard and Albert. If we assign to Lombard the merit of having laid the literary groundwork of Scholasticism by his *Book of the Sentences*, we must at the same time deny him any other merit in the comparison with Aquinas. Nothing can be more meagre than the Work itself in point of thought. This absence, indeed, of all purely intellectual merit is the great cause of that Ecclesiastical sanction which the *Book of the Sentences* obtained. The timidity of the speculation charmed to rest the jealous feeling of spiritual authority: and with some passing slight objections, it was allowed to descend into the Schools as a manual of Ortho-

dox Theology. It thus gave a licence for Theological speculation, whilst it marked out exactly the lists within which the Religious tournament should be held. It embodied in itself, that is, those narrow, exclusive principles on which the system of education in the Latin world had been all along proceeding; reducing them to these two general ones: first, that no authority sanctioned by the Church should be questioned; secondly, that nothing should be attempted to be established, independently of those authorities, or which could not be reconciled with them. The discernment of Lombard appears in his having seized the spirit of his Age, and with a prophetic sagacity laid a foundation on which the shrewder genius of his successors in Scholasticism might build securely. But his Work is nothing more than a rough foundation as compared with the fabric of the *Summa* of Aquinas.

#### 24. Contrast of Albert with Aquinas.

Nor again can we consider the Works of Albert, though more closely resembling those of Aquinas, as presenting an equally comprehensive

and masterly display of the character of Scholasticism. Albert had in view rather to imitate the method of Aristotle, following throughout the *Physical Treatises*, supplying, as he himself says, parts either omitted or lost, and elucidating by digressions what was obscure or doubtful in the Greek Philosopher.\* He affects more the character of the Philosopher than of the Theologian ; though, in the Schoolman, as we shall have occasion to remark more particularly presently, the two functions were almost coincident, as in Aquinas, indeed, they are completely. Employment strictly Ecclesiastical was uncongenial to his taste. For a time he was drawn from his Philosophic seclusion to the more busy station of the Bishopric of Ratisbon : but a restless hankering after his loved studies, and an impatience of the detail of official duties, very soon induced him to renounce the incompatible charge. His devotion to Physical studies especially is evident, from the title of Magician, by which an ignorant and superstitious Age characterised his myste-

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\* Albert. *Mag. Physic.* lib. i. tract. 1. tom. xi. p. 1.

rious operations on Nature. Alchymy and Astrology found in him an ardent devotee; and such was the repute which he obtained for his mystic science, that, in fact, he is more known in modern times for these pursuits than for his Scholastic disputations.\* Aquinas, on the other hand, followed the proper path of the Scholastic

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\* The following passage from Albert sufficiently testifies to his enthusiasm in Alchemy. Having spoken of his laborious travels, and the inquiries he had pursued for ascertaining the truth of the Science, but for a long time without any satisfactory result; he adds: *Ego vero non desperavi, quin facerem labores et expensas infinitas, vigilans, et de loco ad locum migrans omni tempore, ac meditans, sicut dicit Avicena; si hæc res est, quomodo est? et si non est, quomodo non est? Tandem perseveravi studendo, meditando, laborando in operibus ejusdem, quousque quod quærebam inveni, non ex meâ scientiâ, sed ex Spiritûs Sancti gratiâ. Unde quum saperem et intelligerem, quod naturam superaret, diligentius vigilare cæpi in decoctionibus et sublimationibus, solutionibus et distillationibus, cerationibus, et calcinationibus, atque coagulationibus alchimicæ, et in multis aliis laboribus, donec inveni, esse possibilem transmutationem in solem et lunam. Albert. Mag. libell. de Alchim. præfat.*

So extensive was the fame of Albert, that William of Holland, passing by the way of Cologne, paid a visit to the great Professor of the day. On this occasion, Albert astonished his Royal visiter by producing in the depth of Winter from the garden of the cloister the flowers and fruits of Spring. The artificial skill of the hot-house was interpreted as an evidence of the magic art of the Philosopher.

Theologian with an undivided attention. He regarded the attempt to explore the secrets of Nature with a superstitious dread ; so far that, on seeing the speaking automaton which the art of Albert had constructed, in a paroxysm of pious horror he dashed it to pieces, dissolving the demon-spell to which he attributed the wonder.

The voice of fame, indeed, has not unreasonably discriminated between the master and the disciple, in awarding to the one the title of the Great, expressive of the prodigy of his Learning and Science ; to the other, that of the Saint, and the Angelic, characteristic of the devout, theological Philosopher.

25. Literary spirit of Aquinas—Improved versions of Aristotle—Imperfect method of translation.

There is yet another important circumstance by which Aquinas is distinguished, not only from Albert, but from all other Scholastics. There is more of the literary spirit about him. We can scarcely call it Criticism :—for the Critical



Art could not have lived in such days, when examination of principles was forbidden ground to the Religionist and the Philosopher:—still there are attempts at Criticism to be seen in his writings. He ventures to question the correctness of the translation of passages of Aristotle, to compare different versions, and to qualify his own exposition by examination of conflicting authorities. But we see nothing of this in Albert, who is content to follow his text with an unscrupulous and servile docility. A still greater test of the literary spirit of Aquinas is given, in the care expended by him on a new translation of Aristotle. At his desire, a Dominican, by name Henry or William of Brabant, made a new translation of the Treatises of Aristotle from the Greek original.\* Hitherto the versions used

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\* *Wilhelmus de Brabantiâ Ordinis Prædicatorum transtulit omnes libros Aristotelis, de Græco in Latinum, verbum e verbo, quâ translatione scholares adhuc hodiernâ die utuntur in scholis ad instantiam S. Thomæ de Aquino Doctoris. Auct. Anonym. Chron. Slav. apud Lindenbrog. p. 206.*

*Eodem autem tempore, anno nimirum Christi 1271, Henricus Brabantinus, Dominicanus, rogatu D. Thomæ, e Græco in linguam Latinam, de verbo ad verbum, transfert omnes libros*

were principally drawn, not immediately from the Greek, but indirectly from the Arabic, or Hebrew, or Syriac, or Persian; and sometimes from versions that had passed through several of these secondary channels. For it was but a small portion of the *Organon* that Boethius had translated, and in this century many Treatises of Aristotle, which, if not unknown before among the Christians of the West, had at any rate fallen into disuse, were brought into the Schools, either from the Arabians of Spain, or directly from Constantinople and the East. Many of these were brought in that form, in which the successive transfusion from Language to Language only imperfectly represented the sense of the Philosopher. It argues no little vigour of mind in Aquinas at such a time, to have provided for a more genuine acquaintance with the Philosophy, which was destined to hold a permanent dominion in the Church and to absorb

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*Aristotelis. Albertus usus est veteri translatione quam Boethianam vocant. Aventin. Annal. Boior. lib. vii. c. 7.*

Jourdain, *Rech. Crit. sur l'Age et l'Origine des Trad. Lat. d'Aristote*, p. 266.

into its vortex the whole of Christian Theology. By some, indeed, the work of translation has been attributed to Aquinas himself. But besides the express testimonies on the other side, there is no ground to think that he was at all acquainted with the Greek Language. References to Greek words occur in his writings: but these are evidently drawn from second-hand authorities. Indeed, the business of translation may be regarded as properly a professional one. The Philosopher superintended the task; whilst the learned Jew, or Saracen, conversant with the Greek, the Latin, and the Arabic Languages, was engaged in the actual process of translation. The Christian Philosopher resorting to Toledo, had the Greek text interpreted to him in the vulgar idiom, the Moorish, or Spanish Language spoken there; and then himself rendered the interpretation so given into Latin.\* The new translations, indeed,

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\* This appears to have been the mode in which Michael Scot, like Albert, also, more known for Magic than for Philosophy, performed his translations of Aristotle. He was at Toledo, engaged in this work, in 1217. Christian students used to learn at Toledo the necromancy of the Arabians. See Jourdain, *Rech. Critiques*, &c. p. 139, 235.

which Aquinas was instrumental in producing, were probably little more than collations of those already extant, with a view to ascertain their variations ; and not original versions founded on a simple study of the original Greek.

In setting forth then a general view of the Philosophy of Aquinas, we may fairly assume, that we are taking a survey of Scholasticism in its most general form, the proper characteristic of its nature, independently of individual peculiarities which may have accidentally modified it in part.\*

In examining into any Philosophy, there are two leading points to which we naturally advert : 1, the substance itself of the Philosophy ; or the principles in the different departments of human knowledge, of which it actually consists : 2, the method on which it proceeds ; what data it assumes, and in what order it applies these for the construction of its system.

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\* Aquinas is particularly selected by Dante to represent the Philosophers of the Schools.

26. Scholasticism confounds the Method and the Principles of Philosophy.

Now in the Philosophy of the Schoolmen these two points of view meet in one. We have shown how the method of Aristotle was gradually superinduced on the established Platonism of the Church. The introduction of so powerful an ally was the means of revolutionizing the system to whose aid it was brought. The Philosophy so constantly engaged in the field with the heretical disputant, obtained a practical ascendancy founded on its actual services in the emergencies of the Faith. Not that we are to suppose that Platonism was extinct in the Church, even when the Aristotelic Philosophy triumphed. This would be to mistake the true character of Scholasticism, which, as we have pointed out, never abandoned its first attachment to the Platonic mysticism. But Platonism was the strong under-current. The Aristotelic Philosophy was the tide that flowed on the surface, propelled by every wind and storm that vexed the Church.

The Aristotelic Philosophy, accordingly, being

cultivated only as a Science of defence, and consequently established as a Logical Philosophy, what was in its proper nature simply a method of discussion, became in the result an organ of investigation, and a Science also of the first principles of every other Science. This was in direct opposition to the views of Aristotle himself: for the great service rendered by him to the cause of Scientific Truth, was, that he separated Logic from the Metaphysics with which it had been confounded in all former systems. But the Church Philosophers, cleaving to the original misconceptions of the Platonic Schools, brought back that confusion, and perpetuated it in their own artificial mode of philosophizing.

27. Source of this Confusion in the nature of General Terms.

The Science of Logic, leading us to consider the manner in which general principles are applied to the deduction and communication of knowledge, is apt on that account to give the delusive idea of its power to interpret the secrets of Nature. The universality of the terms of Lan-

guage is mistaken for the generalization of facts. Because, as we may explain this more fully, we discover by reasoning from words as the signs of our ideas, a vast variety of particulars involved in general notions, (every argument being in fact a deduction of some particular out of a more general principle,) we seem to have occasion only to study the abstractions denoted by words, to obtain a universal Science. Plato's Philosophy carried this notion to the utmost point, stating it in the form of his well-known theory,—that knowledge is nothing but reminiscence. And the same theory has been expressed by Moderns under a still more paradoxical form—that Science is nothing but a Language well arranged. The most abstract ideas become, according to such a view, the most adequate and true conceptions of things as comprehending under the most scientific form the infinite variety of subordinate particulars. Such a Philosophy resolves itself into a system of Idealism. By realizing the mere abstractions of the Mind, and at once converting Metaphysical Truth into Physical, and Physical into Metaphysical, it results in a refined Materialism, or

Idealism, a system in which Metaphysical Truth is all in all.

28. Coincidence of Idealism and Realism the result.

Such then, in the general view of its nature, was the Philosophy of the Schools. It was pure Idealism, so far as Platonism predominated in it : it was Realism, so far as the Logical or peculiarly Aristotelic character pervaded the whole system. Idealism describes the system itself as to the nature of the principles on which it was founded ; Realism describes the method of investigation pursued, the action of those Logical processes by which it explored the Truth. We may characterise Scholasticism truly, by one or the other of these two designations, according as we look to its internal nature, or to its Logical method of proceeding.

The Scholastic Philosophy is the only system in which Idealism and Realism have completely coincided. Plato gave the name indeed of Dialectic to the Supreme Science : for the train of thought by which he arrived at his theory of



Ideas, naturally suggested that name as the designation of the Science of Ideas. But still the Ideal or Metaphysical character predominates over his whole Philosophy. He argues strenuously, but as if argument, *as such*, was not his concern ; as if he wanted only to clear away by discussion the obstructions of the human intellect, and to present the realities of the invisible world—the “Ideas” of his system—clearly before the eye of abstract contemplation. In Aristotle there is a great deal of Realism, especially in his Physical Philosophy, which is, for the most part, an assumed Science of Nature, deduced from the abstractions of Language. At the same time his general views are entirely adverse to Idealism, and no Philosopher of antiquity has displayed so fully throughout his writings the scientific value of experience and observation. But in the Schoolmen, Idealism and Realism go hand in hand. In them, there is (no proper, direct appeal to experience and observation.) The visible world is to them only a shadow and type of the Metaphysical ; a writing, as it were, in cipher, to be read by the key of those recondite

truths which exist in the secret chambers of the intellect. But their very business is argumentation. And thus conclusions, indicating nothing more than connexions of thought in the mind, are continually realized in their mode of speculation; applied, that is, as if they were indications of real connexions in Nature. This Idealism and this Realism correspond with the mystical and the argumentative character, which, as has been already observed, were combined in the system.

#### 29. Distinction of Nominalist and Realist.

We find, indeed, the different Schoolmen, especially after the XIIIth Century, distinguished from each other as Nominalists or Realists. The Logical question which had attracted particular notice in the XIth Century, respecting the nature of Universals, as the phrase then was, or as to the existence of objects corresponding to the general Ideas denoted by abstract terms, having been silenced for a while by the authority of Anselm of Canterbury, was again agitated with renewed vigour in the XIVth Century, and from

that time ostensibly divided the Schools into the two great parties of Nominalists and Realists. These two classes included under them a great variety of shades of opinion ; of which we may state the two extremes to be : on the one hand, the opinion that regarded abstract terms as mere sounds ; on the other hand, that which supposed a Physical Being corresponding to every abstract term. Still Nominalism, as it existed in the Scholastic Ages, was rather a modification of Realism, or the exception from the general system. It certainly preluded to a more liberal method of philosophizing : and this tendency appears to have been foreseen, though indistinctly, in the jealous opposition which it excited. But the Scholastic Nominalists were practically Realists, so far as they pursued the same mode of establishing truths by syllogistic processes, as those who were Realists in theory. Albert and Aquinas, to whom we have attributed the formation of the Scholastic system, were avowed Realists.

## 30. Conceptualism the prevalent Doctrine.

The truth appears to be, that an intermediate opinion,—that denoted in modern Philosophy by Conceptualism, the Ideal theory of Locke,—was the notion most generally adopted in the subject. This was the neutral ground on which the controvertists on each side seem to have retired when pressed by argument on the other. The ambiguity of the word *res*, from its extensive application to the objects of thought as well as to those of sense, gave a facility to the arguer for sliding from the notion of Physical existence to Metaphysical, and again from Metaphysical to Physical. An abstraction so vague, indeed, it is hardly possible to hold distinctly in the mind: so that the theorist on a question in which this term is so essentially involved, is apt to be led astray even in the processes of his own mind in forming his view of the subject. It is no wonder, therefore, that the Scholastic disputant should have found such matter of altercation on this speculative question.

## 31. Importance of the Theory of Universals.

Nor was the question by any means so trifling as we are apt to suppose it at this day. The whole system of Scholasticism depending on abstract general notions, whatever touched the character of these first principles of the Science, affected the whole nature of the Science deduced from them. It raised a question whether the speculative Theology so deduced were sound or not ; and each party, therefore, had to justify his view on this ground. About the same period too, or rather just before the agitation of the question concerning Universals, the discussions relative to the presence of Christ, which had arisen in the IXth Century, began to be revived. And these, turning principally on the notions attached to the words *really* and *truly*, were intimately connected with the theory of general notions. The presence of Christ, indeed, in the Sacrament, as asserted in the speculations of the Schools, was that of the abstract nature of Christ : the divinity and manhood conjoined in His person being regarded as that real Being,

which, truly existing in itself, was capable of communicating itself to the forms of bread and wine, and of being thus infinitely multiplied and infinitely present without multiplication of its own essence. So that any question as to the nature of abstract existences was a question also bearing on the doctrine of the Eucharist.

### 32. Theology becomes the Universal Science.

The mixed character of Scholasticism develops itself to our view more fully when we look closely into its internal nature. A universal *à priori* system of speculative Truth would be the natural produce of such a combination ; or, in other words, a Theological Philosophy, comprehending in it all knowledge. Consistently to follow out such a method of philosophizing, there could be no pause to the speculatist, until he had reached the fountain of all Truth, and seized the primary principles existing in the mind of the Deity himself. The Schoolmen, indeed, as disciples of Christianity, felt themselves bound by the double tie of Religion and Church-authority, to uphold that Divine know-

ledge, which the Scriptures and the dogmas of the Church had delivered, as the ultimate highest knowledge of Man. They thought it necessary therefore to show, that in this were contained the elements of all Truth whatever ; not only in matters of Religion,—in what concerns the relations of Man to his Creator,—but generally, in every department of human speculation. This mistaken notion of revealed Truth was engendered and fostered by that Ideal and Logical theory of the nature of Science, which they had adopted. Had they simply regarded Science as (the generalization of facts) they could not have incurred this error in regard to revealed Truth. They must then have seen the propriety of suffering each (Science to rest on its proper principles obtained from the study of its own facts, without endeavouring to bring all together within the limits of a universal method. But an essentially Logical Philosophy is not satisfied with this simple Historical method. It must lay down its theorems as universals, and from them deduce synthetically all other truths as necessary consequences of these first principles. In that

case only would the requisitions of a Logical method of Philosophy be fully satisfied. Hence we find Aquinas condemning as false whatever may be found in any other Science contrary to the principles of Theology. And we know from the History of Philosophy how extensively such a maxim has operated to the prejudice of scientific Truth : the authorities of the Latin Church having constantly opposed all improvements in Natural Science, from the fear of contradicting some doctrine of Theology.\*

### 33. Union of the Theory of Ideas with that of Matter and Form.

The later Platonists had prepared the way for this universal Theological Science in assigning to

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\* Witness the persecutions of Roger Bacon and of Galileo. The instance which has been often cited, of the declaration of the Jesuits in their edition of Newton's *Principia*, that they assume the motion of the earth in order to the demonstrations, but comply at the same time with the papal decrees against its motion, is in itself enough to illustrate the point. Their words are: *Newtonus in hoc tertio libro telluris motæ hypothesim assumit. Autoris propositiones aliter explicari non poterant, nisi eâdem quoque factâ hypothesi. Hinc alienam coacti sumus gerere personam. Caterum latis a summis Pontificibus contra telluris motum decretis nos obsequi profiteamur.* Tom. iii. ed. 1742.



the "Ideas" of their master's theory a locality in the Divine mind. But a difficulty arose to the Schoolmen, as the disciples of Aristotle, in reconciling this tenet of the new Platonism with Aristotle's disavowal of the Ideal theory. The Eclectic method of Philosophy, established by the labours of Boethius in the Latin Church, provided a solution of the difficulty, in the introduction of Aristotle's physical theory of Matter and Form. Under these two terms Aristotle had classed all the principles which respect the Physical constitution of bodies: *Matter* denoting all that constitutes them Physical Beings simply; all those properties by which they affect the senses, or display to our observation changes in their composition: *Form* denoting whatever distinguishes them as belonging to different classes of being. Both these terms were of Logical origin; being, in truth, heads of classification under which the Mind ranges its first rough observations on Nature. The notions of Matter and Form were therefore readily incorporated into a Logical Philosophy. By an extension of the terms, which Aristotle's authority by no

means warranted, they were applied by his expositors universally. As it was apparent of every subject of consideration, that it had certain points of agreement with others, and also certain peculiarities, or points of difference ; it was concluded, that these Logical arrangements might be applied to every subject indiscriminately. And thus the Schools resounded throughout with the technical language of matter and form. Had these notions been restricted to their true meaning as subtle abstractions of the mind ; as practical analysis performed by the Mind for its own direction in the general survey of Nature ; it might have been well : though little benefit to the purpose of sound Philosophy could have resulted from their adoption. But the mischief was, that they were taken into the Scholastic system, as expressions denoting Physical constituents in the different subjects to which they were applied. Everything was considered as *made up* of Matter and Form ; as consisting of something *out of which* it was made, and of something *by which* it was made what it actually was. Then it came further to be supposed, that

these two constituents of things might exist *separately* from each other : and the ingenuity of a subtle Philosophy was exercised in giving a history of their conjunction ; or in explaining how things came to exist as they actually are, by the descent of Forms into Matter. So that, these principles of a perverted Aristotelic Philosophy being adopted, the proper order of philosophical inquiry was reversed. In the Scholastic system, the object was, not to rise from individuals to general principles, but to descend from the highest abstractions to individual beings. The only certain real existences given in the system, were the natures of Matter and Form. The problem then was, to find the principle of individuation : to show how these infinite natures were circumscribed and limited in the various individual objects which the sensible universe presents.

#### 34. Accommodation of Aristotle's notion of the Deity.

But Aristotle's Physical Philosophy being understood in this manner, the difficulty arising from his rejection of the Ideal theory was easily evaded.

It was only to call these ideas by the name of Forms, and the objectionable part of the theory was then removed. For Aristotle had only argued against the separate sole existence of Ideas, as a philosophical account of all actual individual Beings. He had said nothing to exclude the supposition of the pre-existence of the *Forms* of things in the Divine intellect, or rather according to his view of the Deity, in the universal energizing, or motive principle of Nature. Indeed, he might be considered as having invested these abstract Forms with some such pre-existence, in assigning them, as the ultimate *ends*, to which Nature must be conceived to tend, in all its manifold operations and productions, with instinctive, unceasing effort.

### 35. Inconsistency of this notion with Christianity.

This notion of the Divine principle, evidently, could not be embraced by a believer in Christianity. Christianity is expressly opposed to it, inasmuch as Christianity reveals the Deity to us in the strictest sense as a personal agent, acting on and controlling by His will the course of Nature, not

identified and confounded with that course. It was necessary, therefore, in the reception of Aristotle's Philosophy, to modify this view of the Divine principle. And this was effected by the alliance formed with the more pious theism of Plato. The incongruity of the alliance was indeed continually appearing to view. Some following too closely the language of Aristotle would relapse into notions of Pantheism, attributing to Nature itself an instinctive divine vitality ; others, again, would reduce the whole of Nature to mere phantom and shadow, asserting in pure Idealism the sole real existence of the Divine Being.

Thus, however, were the Platonic Ideas reinstated in their empire over the realms of Philosophy. A basis, accordingly, was laid for a Theological interpretation of Nature, (if interpretation may be said of a system which was only a string of mental anticipations,) and at the same time for rationalizing the truths of Revelation.

## 36. Profane Sciences studied as Instruments of Theology.

The manner in which the profane Sciences were brought into the service of Christian Theology, and blended with it in one system, is a point particularly to be noticed. The confusion itself was drawn from Platonism : so also Platonism furnished the mysterious links between the worlds of Reason and of Revelation. As the Ideas of the purely intellectual region were assumed to be the primary elements of all Truth,—the principles from which the constitution and order of the sensible universe were derived,—they were evidently to be explored in those types and representations of them which the universe presents to our observation. Plato had remarked the great law of Association in the constitution of the human mind, and applied it to the establishment of his Ideal theory. From the observed fact, that one object serves to suggest to the Mind a variety of other objects, he concluded that the whole of Nature was to be regarded as (an instrument of suggestion;) as the means of ✓  
reviving in the Mind the invisible, recondite

truths of the intellectual world, which had a more *real* existence, according to his theory, than the flowing things of the external world cognizable by the senses.\* He thus bound together Physical and Metaphysical Truth; and led the philosophical student through the course of the various Sciences, as through a necessary initiation, to the sublime point, where the purified intellect should ultimately expand itself to the contemplation of the mysterious Ideas. We may remark, that his attempt was, in fact, to merge the certainty of all other Truth in the evidence of consciousness; and to counteract the method of the vulgar, which holds no other Truth so real as that which is apparent to outward observation. The Scholastic Theologians proceeded on the same view. They wished to exalt the spirituality of the Christian profession above the grossness of worldly pursuits; and therefore sank all profane Science in Theology. In Theology was the reality and the truth of Science: all other Science was instrumental and subsidiary. The world of sense

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\* See the *Phædo*.

and observation, according to their view, lay between the Divine Mind and the human. The Mind by the study of the Forms impressed in that world, under the guidance of the natural Sciences, penetrates the interposing mass; and thus at length, rising by the steps of sublime contemplation, is brought more immediately into the Divine presence, and enabled more and more to see God as He is.

37. Consequent Theological character of all Science.

In accomplishing this connection, Theology was the first and the last of the links. Theology both natural and revealed was the point of departure, as well as the consummation of all Science. The principles of Theology were assumed as those by which each Science was to be interpreted and ascertained. The dominion of Ideas was carried throughout. Each Science had its Metaphysical basis; not being founded on any conclusions of experience, but on mental abstractions, or definitions of its terms. This is particularly evidenced in Physics; where the Scholastics had the example itself of Aristotle to



mislead them, and to increase their fundamental misconception of the nature of this Science in particular. Here the Theological character of the principles assumed is apparent at the first view. The doctrine of final causes is the master principle of the whole inquiry. Instead of looking at phenomena, and examining things in themselves, the Schoolman, following Aristotle, is employed in considering the tendencies or designs of Nature, and constructing a hypothetical system on assumptions of what is best and most perfect in Nature. The whole drift of his inquiry is the *Idea*, or abstract *Form*, which Nature is supposed to be endeavouring to realize. Thus, therefore, in the pursuit of his lofty Science, his own mind, as the mirror of the Divine,—the philosophical synopsis of all that exists without it in the universe,—becomes the only field of study ; whilst he neglects that actual Form which things present to external observation, as accidental, and unreal, and unscientific.

To examine, however, more particularly into the influence of this mode of philosophizing on the

different branches of Science, we will proceed first to the character of the Theology resulting from it.

38. Speculative Theology multiplied by Refutations of Heresy.

As in the ancient Philosophy there was an exoteric and esoteric method ; an internal instruction addressed to the speculative disciple, and a popular one addressed to the general hearer ; so in the Philosophical Theology erected by the Schoolmen, we find a twofold teaching adapted to corresponding classes in the Christian Church. Though the habit of reasoning on the truths of Religion had been formed by the struggles against Heresy and Infidelity, the practice itself once acquired could not easily be renounced ; and a morbid taste for abstract speculation outlived the occasions by which it was engendered. The continued conflicts, indeed, with disputatious Theologians, involved the Orthodox in such a mass of technical doctrines,—of decisions accumulated upon decisions,—that the business of ratiocination became indispensable to the Churchman of

the Middle Age. What may be called an excess of legislation in matters of doctrine had taken place, through the mistaken notion on which Divines had acted, that every variation of opinion required to be ruled by the coercive judgment of the Ecclesiastical power. This state of things naturally led to the creation of a class of expositors and commentators, who should maintain the consistency of this vast accumulation of decisions,—bring to light what was obscure,—defend what was ambiguous from the perverse constructions of the Heretic. For this state of things, instead of resting at any given point, constantly worked its own aggravation. Repeated declarations on controverted statements of the Religious Truth, only opened a larger frontier to hostile invasion. With the conquests of Orthodoxy increased also its points of attack from Heresy : and thus a more complex system of speculative defence was necessarily organized ; and all the outposts of doctrine were fortified and guarded with the subtle arms of orthodox Metaphysics. It is the collection, then, and systematic arrangement of these several points of debate,—these multiplied decisions of

the Church authorities,—that properly constitutes the Scholastic Theology. The Logical Philosophy of the Schools was the cementing principle—that which gave unity and symmetry to the chaotic assemblage. But by this elaborate process, this ceaseless deposition of matter of speculation by the active current of controversy, a pile of Religious doctrine rose to view by the side of the Scriptural Truth—a new land, like the Delta of the Nile, the creation itself of the busy stream, which had been constantly flowing, and accumulating soil in its course. And, like that artificial land, it was the ground on which Priestcraft and Superstition fixed their peculiar abode ; where a speculative Fancy erected the shrines and altars of its Idols ; and whence, as from their proper home, the mystical symbols of Theological doctrine proceeded to diffuse themselves over the Western world.

39. Sketch of the *Summa* of Aquinas. 1224-74

To judge adequately of the nature of this Theology, we have only to take a survey of the celebrated *Summa* of Aquinas. We have there

a complete Science of Theology, sketched in all its parts by a master-hand; the genius, as it were, of Scholasticism embodied by the mighty Magician, whose call it was forced to obey. He did not live, indeed, to work out all the parts of his system; but he had cast the whole at once with a vastness and a minuteness of design, which more reminds one of the great Philosopher himself, whose principles he undertook to expound, than of any other writer. There is, at least, the same endeavour shown, to grasp the subject in all its bearings, and to leave no region of it undistributed or unoccupied, that we find in the most elaborate Treatises of Aristotle.

40. Threefold division of the *Summa*.—*Prima Pars*.

The Work is divided into three great Parts: 1, the Natural; 2, the Moral; 3, the Sacramental. The first, being a speculation concerning the nature of things, lays down and discusses the principles of the Divine Being, from which hangs the golden chain of Physical and Moral Truth in perpetual series. "We have considered," he says, in his Prologue, "that novices

in this doctrine are greatly impeded, in consequence of what has been written by different persons ; partly, indeed, on account of the multiplication of useless questions, articles, and arguments, partly, also, because the things necessary for such to know, are not delivered according to the order of discipline, but according to what the exposition of books required, or as the occasion for disputing presented itself ; partly, indeed, because their frequent repetition generated both disgust and confusion in the minds of the hearers. Studying, therefore, to avoid these faults and others of the like kind, we will endeavour, in confidence of Divine aid, briefly and luminously to pursue, to the extent that the matter will permit, what belongs to sacred doctrine." He proceeds, accordingly, to point out the scientific nature of Christian Theology, that it is strictly a Science capable of being argumentatively established, and resting on certain assumptions, themselves founded in the Divine knowledge, and communicated to Man by Revelation. The questions discussed in this part respect the existence and attributes of God, the nature of His intelligence

and will, His providence and predestination, the Trinity in Unity. From these he proceeds to the Divine effects manifested in the works of Creation, in the existence of Angels, in the material world, and in the human Being; dilating more especially on the subject of Man's nature, and interweaving a mass of Metaphysical discussion concerning the soul and its faculties, its connection with the body, and the primitive condition of Man in Paradise.

41. *Prima Secundæ.*

The Second Part is divided into two; which are commonly distinguished under the titles of the *Prima Secundæ* and the *Secunda Secundæ*. The first of these enters more immediately and strictly on the examination of the nature of Man. The nature of Man has been considered, indeed, in the first part, but under a different point of view; as it is involved in the history of the Divine operations. Here Man is viewed as he is a complex system in himself, having in himself a principle of operation. The former Part considered Man as he is a Physical Being, the crea-

tion of the Divine hand ; the *Prima Secundæ* regards him under the aspect of a Moral and Intellectual agent. Aquinas here takes a survey of the principles of human nature as they are exemplified in human sentiments and actions. Having in the outset examined how Man is naturally impelled to action, in the sequel he views the natural principles as they are modified by the operation of Divine grace. In discussing these subjects, the comparison of the state of Man under the systems of Nature and of Grace, and the doctrines consequently of Free Will, Original Sin, and Justification, come to be considered. The various laws also given for the guidance of Man are minutely examined in this department of the inquiry.\*

#### 42. *Secunda Secundæ.*

The *Secunda Secundæ* takes up the great Moral argument, where the former part had left it, and discusses the several Virtues in detail.

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\* The same kind of abstract speculation into the nature of Law is pursued, which we find adopted by Hooker in the first Book of his *Ecclesiastical Polity*.



The former part had examined the principles of human action under their most general form : this Part considers them as they take the forms of particular Virtues, whether under the influence of Divine Grace, or by the operation of Nature. The Virtues are classed according to the three-fold arrangement, which he found already received in the Church ; as they are Theological or Ethical, Infused or Acquired, or as they are the sevenfold Gifts of the Holy Spirit : the Theological Virtues being Faith, Hope, and Charity ; the Ethical, the four cardinal Virtues, Justice, Prudence, Fortitude, Temperance. This portion of the Work has attracted peculiar notice and commendation as a systematic exposition of Christian Ethics. And, certainly for the copiousness of its matter, the connection of the points of discussion, and the ingenuity with which the Ethical theories of Aristotle are grafted into the Christian Moral system, it fully merits that high admiration which successive Ages have bestowed on it. As for originality of observation, this, of course, we could not expect to find in the most gifted Schoolman. But a close examination will

disclose to the inquirer, that Aquinas has occasionally struck out thoughts, which imply a power of observation superior to the system within which he had restricted himself.

43. *Tertia Pars.*

The Third Part is devoted to the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Sacraments. According to the Scholastic Philosophy, these two subjects were intimately connected. The theories belonging to them were brought into perfect harmony. For since the Sacraments were regarded as vital influences of Grace descending immediately from the sacred person of Christ, it was necessary for the unity of the system, that an adequate notion should be settled of the great truth of the Incarnation. The traces of this connection are sufficiently evident, in the peculiar importance attached by the practice of the Church of Rome, to the particular Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. This importance is derived from the idea, that this Sacrament is the mystical conveyance of the Passion of Christ, that the act of consecration brings down to the consecrated elements the

whole virtue of the priesthood of Christ. The same idea is extended to all the seven Sacraments of the Church of Rome, according to the Scholastic view ; the only difference being, that these are inferior instruments of Grace ; they are *participations* of Christ ; whereas the Eucharist is the *substance* itself of Christ. It was necessary, therefore, that the doctrine of the union of the divinity and humanity in the person of Christ should be premised and fully established, in order that the Sacramental virtue should be represented as flowing in continuous stream from Christ to His mystical body, the Church.

This whole Part, indeed, developes with the utmost precision the complex Philosophy of Expiation, under the representations of it contained in the doctrines and ritual of the Church of Rome. The latter portion of it is occupied with a comparison of the two leading modes of life suggested by Heathen Philosophy and from that adopted into Christianity, the life of Contemplation, and the life of Action ; and in showing, according to the principles of Aristotle, the supe-

riority of the former, or according to its Christian representation, the life of Monastic devotion.

44. Close connection of Questions throughout the *Summa*.

This is a general outline of what is discussed in this extraordinary Work. What however is most important to observe in it, is the connection of the several Parts and questions throughout it. To observe this, is to seize its proper Scholastic character. The Deity himself, it will be perceived, agreeably to what we have already stated as to the general nature of Scholasticism, is the point of departure: and Theology consequently furnishes the principles, on which the whole fabric of the various Science included in the Work is rested. All the other Sciences are strictly treated as handmaids and auxiliaries to Theology. They are employed instrumentally, as the means of disengaging, if we may so express it, the principles of the Divine Science, from the external forms in which they are involved,—whether these forms be the mysteries of Revelation or of Nature,—and presenting them as pure matter of intellectual perception to the

philosophic mind. All other Sciences, that is, served only as a method of analysis,—as a symbolical Language, analogous to that of Algebra, by which the connections of Sacred Truth might be ascertained and systematically deduced. Accordingly a great part of the discussion is occupied in perfecting this symbolical Language, as we have called it; in showing, by examination of doubts and difficulties on various points, the coherency of the analytical system in itself. This, of course, was required in such a mode of philosophizing; just as a method of Algebra must cohere in all its parts, that the interpretations of its symbols may throughout be consistent.

45. Real Theological importance of Scholastic Discussions.

There is still, however, amidst all the speculative matter with which this Work of Aquinas abounds, a very valuable Theological knowledge to be extracted from it. It brings into one view the subtle distinctions and arguments, which Theologians at various times have employed to maintain their peculiar doctrines. It enables us

to ascertain the precise controversial sense of terms in Theology. We see here the reasons for their introduction, and their mutual connections. It was, in fact, in the course of the Scholastic discussions, and by their instrumentality, that the exact force of these terms was positively fixed. Previously, their sense had remained in a fluctuating state ; the early polemical writers having varied in their use of them. There had been, at the same time, a constant endeavour to reduce the use of them to greater exactness. Now at length in the proper age of Scholastic Theology, the scheme, of uniformity was wrought to its perfection. A large induction of instances was brought from the volumes of ancient Polemics ; and an acute Reason was exercised upon them, in rejecting differences of meaning, and selecting the points of general agreement. In this office, the Scholastic Divines have shown a real philosophical power : and to estimate their merits properly, we must contemplate them under this point of view. A study of Aquinas will convince us that he was not a mere compiler of authorities, or a mere Logician, but

that he possessed a true perception of the nature of Philosophy, whilst he was cramped by the fetters of an artificial method, and was compelled to exercise that power within the narrow range of a technical Theology.

#### 46. Futile Character of the Scholastic Physics.

From what has been already observed on the subject, it is to be expected that the Physical Philosophy of the Schools should present nothing but a barren waste to the view. There is nothing indeed in it of that animation and business which the Mind expects to contemplate in opening a volume of the History of Nature. But all is silent as the page itself, which arrogantly and vainly attempts to tell of laws unexplored by the Philosopher. Ideas of power, and motion, and energy are presented before us: but it is only in the little laboratory of the Mind itself that all this activity of Nature is exhibited. We seem to be standing by as spectators of the construction of the fabric of the universe; the laws by which all the changes of the natural world take place, appear to be subjected to our survey: but we

find the whole system only a vast illusion, produced by the dizzy height to which we have been carried. The speculation taking its outset from the great original Causes of things in the Mind of the Creator, mocks us by the unreal universality of the principles, which it presents to us as solutions of the course and constitution of Nature. As theories of the creative and disposing power of the Divine Author of Nature, these principles may possess a speculative truth: they may, that is, be just, comprehensive views of the objects of the natural world, as they admit of being mentally analyzed into different views of the Divine agency. But, as Bacon observes, of the whole Scholastic method of anticipation, "the subtilty of Nature far exceeds the subtilty of Sense and Intellect:"\* and these general principles accordingly, specious as they are in promise, are much too superficial in reality, to give any sound information concerning the actual processes of Nature.

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\* *Nov. Organum*, lib. i. *Aph.* 10.



## 47. Doctrine of Four Universal Causes.

Thus the Schoolmen, following Aristotle, state four universal Causes of existing things: 1, the Material; 2, the Formal; 3, the Efficient; 4, the Final: the Material Cause being supposed to be that common substance or nature, out of which things are made; the Formal Cause, that by which one object is made to differ from others produced out of the same common matter; the Efficient or Motive Cause, that which originates the motion or change from which the particular thing results; the Final Cause, the tendency, or end, to which the whole process of formation has reference, and in which it is completed and perfected. These several Causes (as we have said before respecting the notions of Matter and Form in particular) are evidently nothing more than certain classifications, the mere creations of the Mind, under which it arranges its different views of any object considered as a thing *produced*. They are so many different reasons which the Mind may assign for the existence of a thing; and the aggregate of which seems to give a full

account of its being. For the Material Cause is the first most general view that we take of it ; that general resemblance according to which we class it with certain other objects. The Formal Cause is a more distinct view of it, exempting it from that vagueness in which our first rough classification had left it. The Efficient Cause is a still further limitation of it, as the effect of a given power. The Final Cause again brings it still more within the grasp of the Mind by assigning the boundaries to which it is tending, and beyond which it cannot pass. Now all these Causes or reasons may be very useful to us *logically*,\*—as principles to guide our investigation into the nature of any object,—but without experience and observation they are utterly fruitless. They are the rules by which our observations are to be

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\* Take, for example, the familiar instance of Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood from an application of the doctrine of Final Causes. By appealing to the principle according to which the Mind views an object in its ultimate *tendency or end*, he was led to consider whether the structure of the valves in the blood-vessels might be thus limited and summed up, as it were, in a final result: and by *observation* on them according to this principle, discovered the *fact* of the circulation.

conducted, and they of course imply that these observations should be made. The Schoolmen, however, used their Logical rules *instead* of observation, and set themselves to explain how each object in Nature was *constructed* according to these rules.

#### 48. Doctrine of Contraries.

The doctrine of Contraries, again, which the Schoolmen adopted from the ancient Physics, as an explanation of the changes which took place in the natural world, what was this but the realizing of a principle of Logic, and vainly endeavouring to make the operations of Nature submit to a law of the human understanding? It is evident that there are certain notions which mutually exclude one another; that the same thing, for instance, cannot be hot and cold at the same moment; and that to remove the one idea therefore is to admit the idea of the other. But the Schoolmen applied this Logical truth to Physical existences. They gave an activity, that is, to these abstract notions, and regarded any two Contraries, as principles coming and departing in

perpetual real succession, and which, by their presence or their absence, constituted Physical bodies what they are.

49. Principles of Transmutation and Privation—Generation and Corruption—Doctrine of Motion—Potential and Actual Being.

With this doctrine of Contrarieties the ancient Physics connected the principles of Transmutation of bodies, of Privation, and the distinction between Potential and Actual being. These several principles, as flowing out of the same Logical doctrine of Contrarieties, were readily taken into their Physical system by the Logical Philosophers of the Schools. The facility with which the Mind substitutes one notion for another, and varies at will the forms which it creates, was converted into a real capacity of transition in Nature itself from one form of Being into another. Hence every thing in Nature was conceived capable of being changed into another; the same common matter remaining as the subject of the alteration. And thus in the language of the Schools was every thing said to be generated

or corrupted,—the transition from one nature into another being the generation of that which resulted, the corruption of that which disappeared. Thus, too, the motion of bodies was said to be of three kinds : since besides locomotion, the changes which occurred, either by the alteration of the thing, or by its growth and diminution, were included under the term : Logical distinctions being here again converted into Physical forces. The principle of Privation, clearly part of the same Logical analysis by which the notions foreign to any subject are excluded from it, underwent the like Physical adaptation ; the qualities *mentally* excluded by any particular notion, being conceived to be *physically* removed from it, when the thing passed from one nature into another. In like manner, attributing to every thing a potential and an actual being, realized distinctions which exist only in the Mind : the former being the object, as it may be supposed to exist in that capable of producing it ; as the plant, for instance, in the seed ; the latter being the production into being, of that which before only existed in such a capacity or power.

Upon this distinction, indeed, it should be observed, the Schoolmen, closely following Aristotle, founded their philosophical description of the Deity as "pure act." All created things existed at one time in *power*; at another time in *act*. But in God, in whom nothing is antecedent, nothing consequent, all is Action and Energy at once.

#### 50. Notion of the Deity as Pure Act.

This notion of the Deity as "Energy," or "Act," was the connecting principle of the Theology and Physics of the Schools. That the Deity pervaded all things as the ultimate Sovereign Good, which all things, whether animate or inanimate, desired to attain, and in attaining which the perfection of each consisted,—was the Theological point of view in their system. But it was further required to exhibit the Deity, as the universal Principle of Motion, as the *origin* of those changes which were observed in the world. And this was accomplished by the representation of him under the notion of "pure operation," or "act." The Divine goodness be-

came thus, by the realism of the system, a real vital power impelling the whole course of Nature. Regarded as an unoriginated, ceaseless energy, it presented an adequate cause of the perpetuity of life, and motion, and production throughout the universe.

#### 51. Scholastic Philosophy of Mind.

In noticing the general character of the Scholastic Theology and Physics, we have brought forward the heaviest charges which lie against the system. In the Sciences which immediately belong to the Philosophy of Human Nature, whether in those purely conversant about the intellect or the heart, we cannot apply the same censure to the Scholastic method ; though at the same time we cannot give, even here, unqualified praise. A great part of their Metaphysics was mere Ontology ; a Science, that is, of the abstract nature of Being, meagre in its pursuit and unfruitful in its result. For they did not extend the term Metaphysics, according to modern usage, to the Science of the laws of the human Mind. The knowledge of the nature of Mind

was included by Aristotle, and other ancient Philosophers, under Physics : and the Schoolmen here, as in other respects, followed the arrangement already prescribed. Nor is there indeed any fault in such an arrangement ; if we understand by the nature of the Mind, simply the laws of its operations, as unfolded in the facts of consciousness and observation. And, perhaps, it would be better if the Science of Metaphysics were restricted to an investigation of the laws of Thought ; to an analysis, that is, of the various notions of the Mind. In this view of the Science, Language becomes the great medium of observation : since Language has been formed by that very analysis which we are formally pursuing in this method of Metaphysical Science. This is the view given in the Treatise of Aristotle, to which modern commentators have assigned the name of *The Metaphysics* ; and which is consequently adopted by the Schoolmen. So far as this restricted view of the Science is concerned, much valuable matter is to be collected from their writings. No Philosophers have traced with such patience, and minute exactness, the



shades by which the Ideas involved in terms of Language are discriminated from each other, or more illustrated that secret process by which Ideas are combined and infinitely diversified. Their whole Philosophy indeed bears on this point. But their great error is, as we have throughout endeavoured to show, that they have carried principles of this Science into other Sciences, and by a fallacious Realism have made these principles interpreters of external nature.

#### 52. Logic confounded with Metaphysics.

Further, as studying Metaphysical Science by the medium of Language, they were led to overlook the limits which separated it from Logic. Accordingly, though they have displayed a wonderful practical acuteness as Logicians, they have by no means excelled, as scientific expositors of Logical Truth. They cultivated it chiefly in subservience to Metaphysical Truth, and therefore comparatively neglected the treatment of that part of it which more strictly relates to the theory of argument. Paradoxical as it

may seem, they had properly no Logic strictly so called. Logic, not being studied by them as a Science of Language, but as a method of universal discovery, was in consequence of this misapplication, stinted of its due proportion as a Science of reasoning ; whilst it was preposterously enlarged in its immediate connexion with Metaphysics.

### 53. Importance of Aristotle's Ethics—Moral Theology.

In Moral Science they had an admirable guide in the Ethical system of Aristotle. The extensive and accurate knowledge of human nature which Aristotle displays throughout his Moral Treatises, served to his disciples of the Schools instead of their own experience. Otherwise, shut out as they were from the general intercourse of mankind, and living entirely in the secret converse of their own thoughts, how could they have learned the nature of human actions and sentiments, principles which chiefly depend on society for their perfect developement ? As it is, they have merged Moral Philosophy in The-

ology, by connecting the rules of duty with the abstract notion of the Deity regarded as the Chief Good of Man. We feel, indeed, even in this day, the effect of this confusion, in the vague opinions commonly held respecting the relation of Morality to Theology. But the case was here as in their Logic. Their practice was superior to their theory. Whilst they constructed a system of Moral Theology, as their Ethical science was termed, they spoke as practical Moralists with a wisdom far exceeding the stretch of their technical Philosophy. Much of this practical excellence must undoubtedly be attributed to the clear outlines which Revelation has sketched for those who would "do justly and love mercy," whilst they also "walk humbly with their God." Still as the Scriptures refrain altogether from Moral theory, simply employing the popular language on Moral subjects, to express their precepts; there is ample room for the Scriptural Theologian to construct his own system of Ethics. And thus have Philosophers, in some instances, at the same time that they acknowledged the authority of the Scriptures, de-

viated widely in their conclusions from the practical spirit of Christianity. This, in fact, is what has happened in the case of the Schoolmen. The pursuit of the principle of the Chief Good,—the Platonic part of their Ethical doctrine,—led them to place the excellence of the Christian life in an estrangement from active duties, and in an entire abstraction of the thoughts and affections from all human concerns. Here it was then, that the Philosophy of Aristotle applied a salutary check, and prevented the whole system of Scholastic Ethics from rushing into a theoretic enthusiasm. How far it acted in this manner may be judged from those of the Schoolmen, who, indulging a mystic imagination, felt less of this control. If we compare Bonaventura with Aquinas, we shall see the decided superiority of the Aristotelic Moralist over the tender enthusiast of the Platonic School.

54. No proper distinction of Sciences in Scholastic Method—  
Importunate use of the Syllogism.

In treating, however, these different Sciences as distinct, we have done so only by way of illus-

tration of the influence of the Scholastic method on the great leading divisions of human knowledge. Strictly to speak, Scholasticism was in itself one absorbing Science, in which all Sciences were confounded. An evidence of this is, that no other kinds of knowledge were pursued by the Scholastic Philosopher, except those which admitted of being transfused into this promiscuous, technical system. There subsisted, indeed, a formal division of the Arts into Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric, Arithmetic, Geometry, Astronomy, Music, the first three named the *Trivium*, the four last the *Quadrivium* : still the Arts were by no means cultivated in themselves, when Scholasticism had once taken deep root. Its dry and leafless branches, spreading out with unhappy luxuriance, withered every thing around them with their funereal shade. As for Rhetoric, considered as an Art of eloquence or composition, it was entirely unknown. An importunate, technical Logic occupied every place, and effectually excluded by its presence, any expression that could strike the imagination or interest the feelings. For it is not only the naked framework of

argument which is presented in the Scholastic page. There is an eloquence in the mere force of argument barely stated, without the least adjunct of recommendation from language. But this is not the mode in which the Scholastic argumentation is exhibited. The parade of the syllogistic process—the anatomy itself of argument—is forced on our notice. The same fundamental error, through which the Schoolmen applied rules of investigation to the solution of Physical facts, is shown in their application of the technical principles of Logic. The syllogism, which, properly considered, is nothing more than a developement of the latent process in every argument, becomes in their hands the method of communicating knowledge, and the instrument by which conviction is to be produced; not the mere analysis of an operation of the Mind. The office of Rhetoric, of course, was entirely superseded by such a method of teaching. There was no room left for arguments of inducement,—for enforcing persuasion by appeals to the intellectual and moral principles of human nature. Nothing could add to the cogency and perspicuity

of an instrument, conceived to be so efficacious and infallible.

55. The Reason the only Principle addressed.

The marks, indeed of the origin of the Scholastic Philosophy, accompany it throughout in its development. As it arose in the struggles of Reason against an imperious authority, so Reason is throughout the principle with which it is concerned, and which alone it endeavours to satisfy. It had not for its object, to win men to the Truth: it sought only to justify and secure an obedience to which the unwilling intellect was constrained.

56. Influence of the Schoolmen on the Reformation of Religion and Philosophy.

Its whole tendency, accordingly, was to magnify Reason against the principle of mere authority. And on this account (though the assertion may seem strange) the Schoolmen must undoubtedly be reckoned among the precursors of the reformation both of Religion and Philosophy.

By the temerity of their speculations, they inured the minds of men to think boldly: and they raised doubts and difficulties which sustained the inquisitive spirit, until at least a better day should dawn upon its efforts. Unconscious they were themselves of the benefit, which was slowly and painfully resulting from their own abortive endeavours. But what they were in themselves was merely accidental, and passed away with them. The spirit which they had nurtured, survived beyond them, to fight against the system within which it had grown up; as the system itself had fought against the arbitrary authority of the Church, within whose bosom it had been cherished. Thus we find some of the early Schoolmen strenuous opponents of the usurpations of Rome: as Robert Grossetete, Bishop of Lincoln, in the XIIIth Century, and Ockam in the XIVth. A reaction, indeed, took place, by which the conclusions of the Scholastic Theologians were expressly affirmed in the decrees of the Church of Rome; and invested with that perpetuity, which the dogmatist of that communion claims for its authoritative declarations.



This curious effect, consequently, has followed ; that the same writers live as authorities in Theological speculation to the Roman Church, who, as the advocates of Reason against the Church-system, have raised up its most formidable antagonists, both in Religion and in Philosophy.

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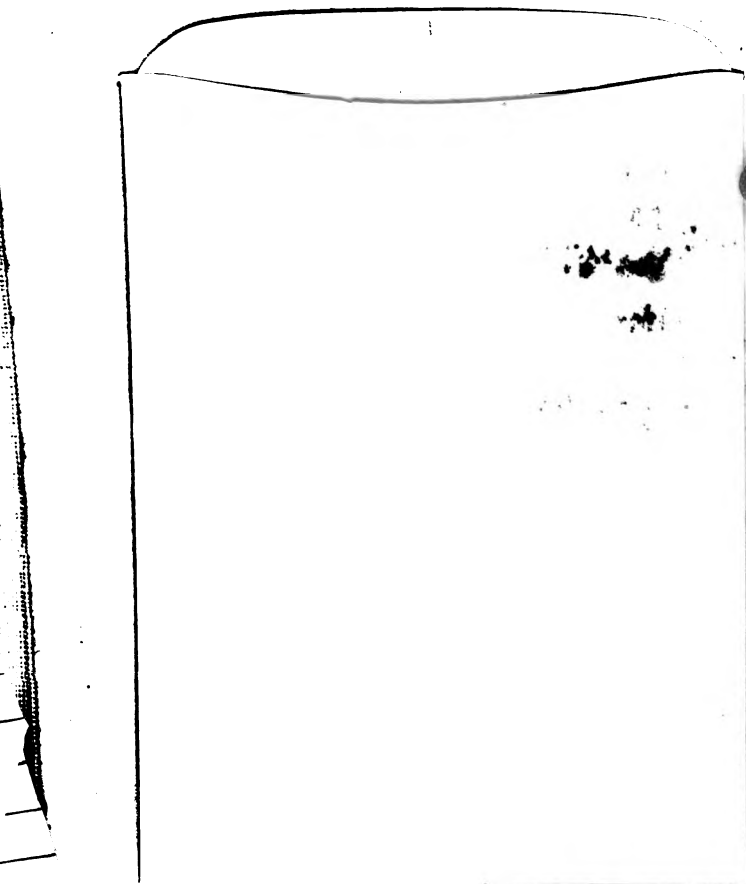
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